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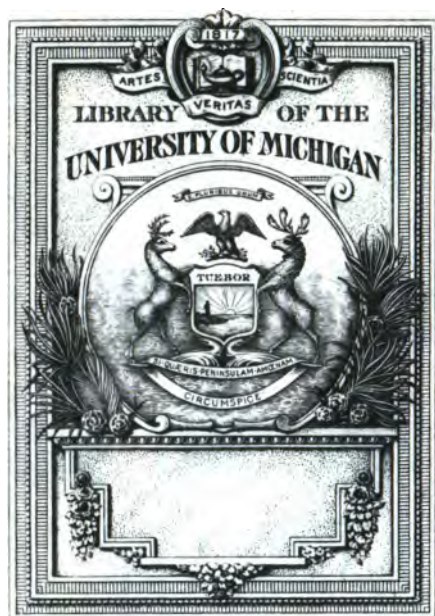
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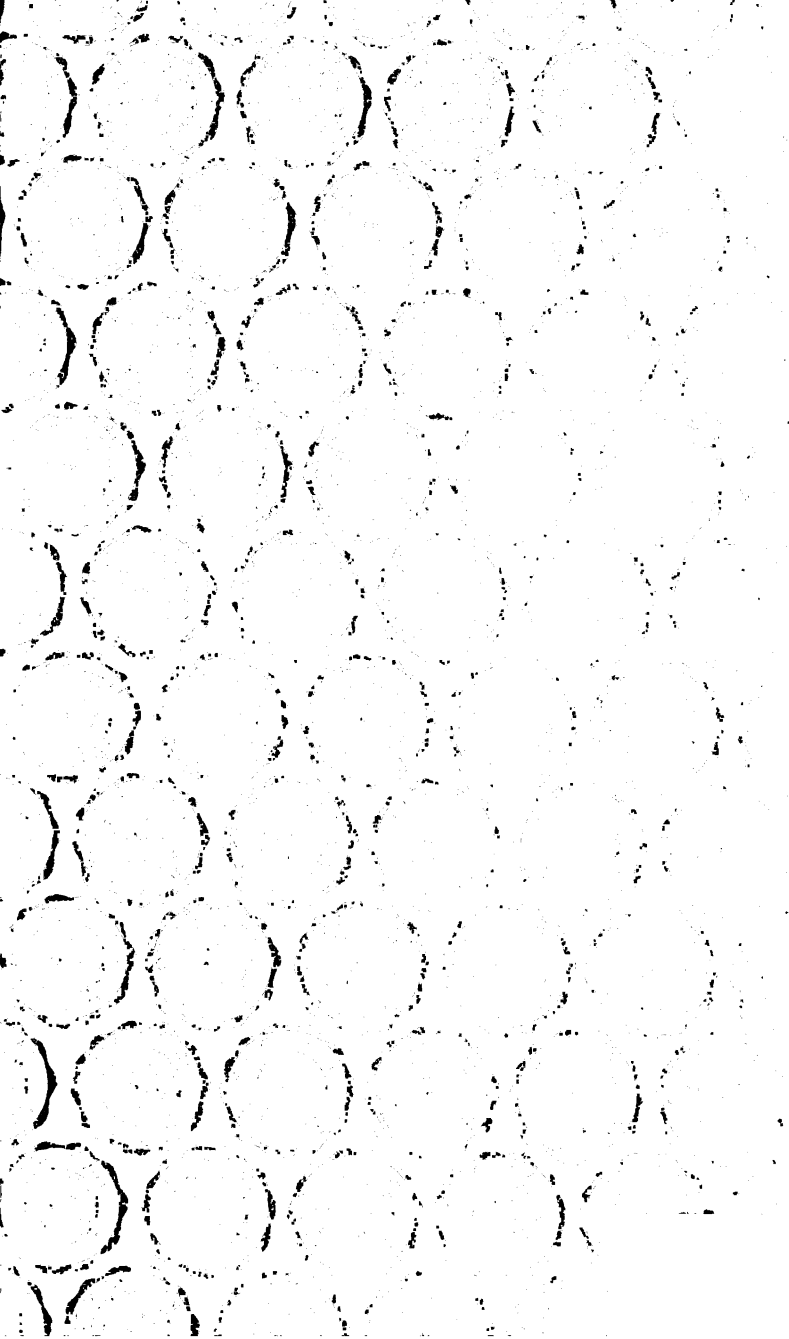
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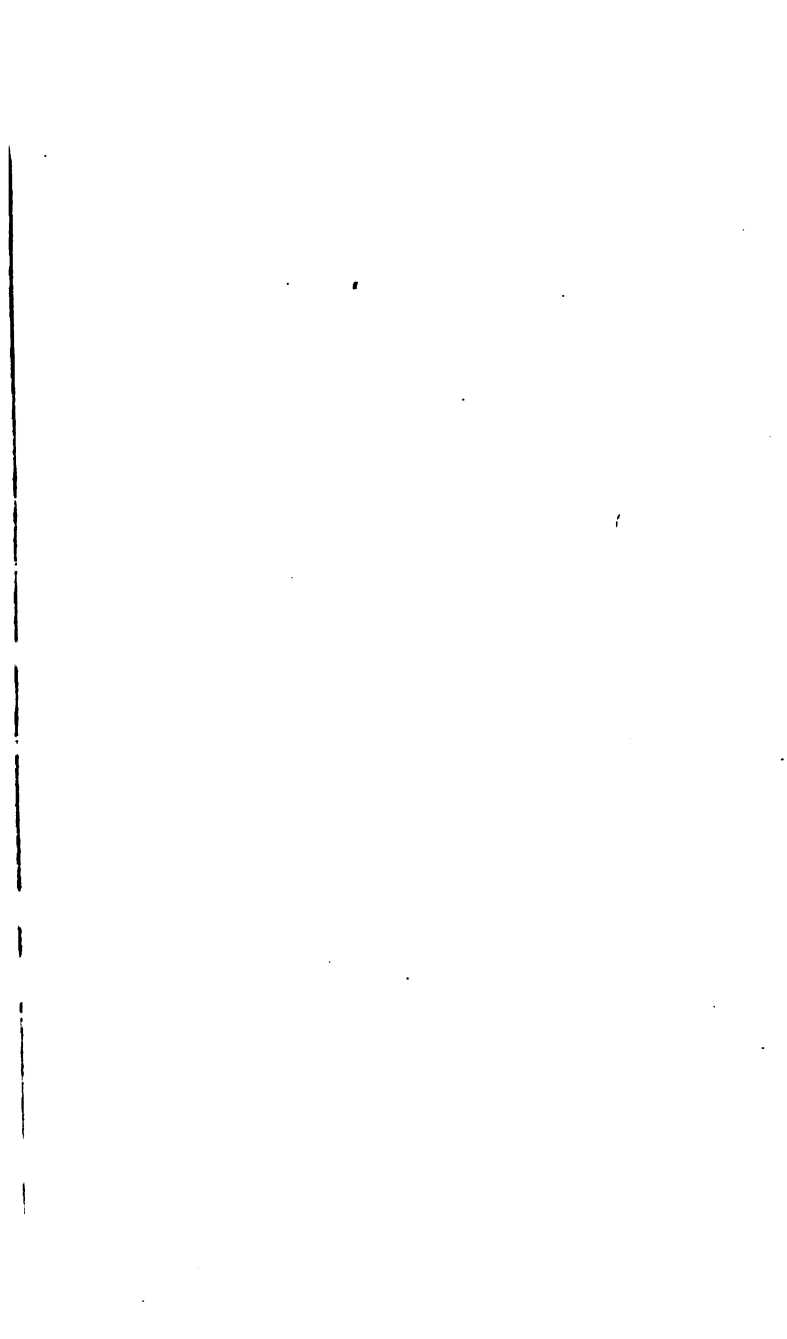
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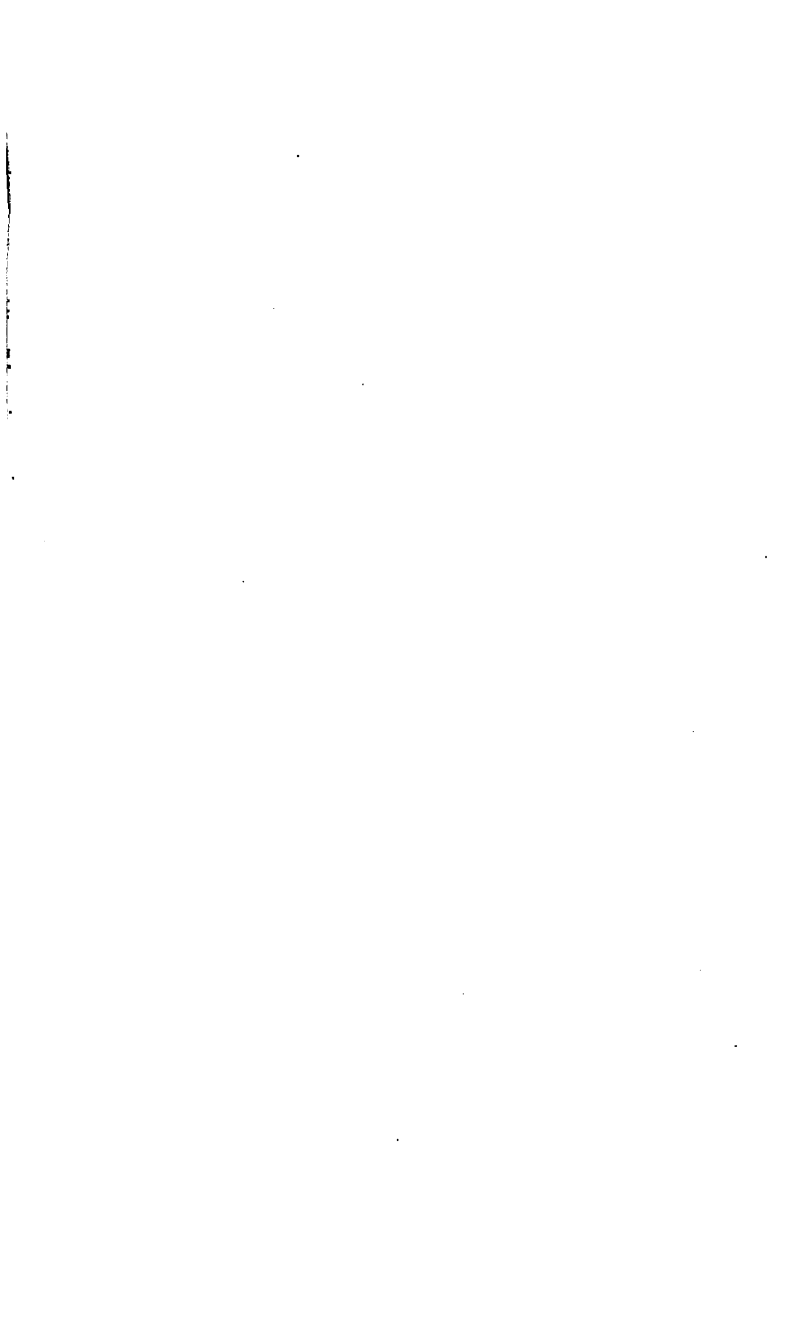


THE GIFT OF
Daughters of Dr Dunster





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THE BOND MAN.

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A STORY OF

THE TIMES OF WAT TYLER.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE idea of the following Tale was suggested on reading the first volume of Robertson's Charles the Fifth, on the Feudal Policy of Germany; and the picture of moral and political debasement presented in those pages, whether as regards the oppressor or the oppressed. Those revolting distinctions have, however, passed away — *villein* is but a thing that was. But if the old chronicles are to be credited, the monk, whom the author has endeavoured to portray in the course of this tale, was the first who whispered in the ear of an English serf, that slavery was not his birthright.

It may, perhaps, be superfluous to add, that all the legal information scattered through the volume, is strictly correct; and every historical event as nearly so as the machinery of the tale permitted. The critical reader, whose indulgence the writer solicits, will immediately perceive from whence the information has been derived.



THE BONDMAN.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT a quarter of a mile south of Winchcombe, on the summit of a gentle elevation, are still the remains of a castle, which, as Fuller says, "was of subjects' castles the most handsome habitation, and of subjects' habitations the strongest castle."

In the month of August, in the year thirteen hundred and seventy-four, this distinguished place, called Sudley Castle, presented an interesting scene—the then owner, in consequence of his father's death, holding his first court for receiving the homage and fealty of his vassals.

The court-yards were thronged with the retainers of the baron, beguiling the hour until the ceremony called them into the hall. This apartment, which corresponded in magnificence and beauty with the outward appearance of the noble pile, was of an oblong shape. Carved representations of battles adorned the lofty oaken ceiling, and suspended were banners and quarterings of the Sudley and De Boteler families. Ancestral statues of oak, clad in complete armour, stood in niches formed in the thick walls. The heavy linked mail of the Normans, with the close helmet, or skull-cap, fastened under the chin, and leaving the face exposed, encased those who represented the early barons of Sudley; while those of a later period were clad in the more convenient and more beautiful armour of the fourteenth century. The walls were covered with arms, adapted to the different descriptions of soldiers of the period, and arranged so as each might provide himself with his proper weapons, without delay or confusion.

The hall had a tessellated pavement, on which the arms of the united families of Sudley and De Boteler (the latter having inherited by marriage, in consequence of a failure of male issue in the former) were depicted with singular accuracy and beauty. About midway from the entrance, two broad steps of white marble led to the part of the hall exclusively appropriated to the owner of the castle. The mosaic work of this privileged space was concealed on the present occasion by a covering of fine crimson cloth. A large arm-chair, covered with crimson velvet, with the De Boteler arms richly emblazoned on the high back, over which hung a velvet canopy fringed with gold, was placed in the centre of the elevation; and several other chairs with similar coverings and emblazonings, but wanting canopies, were disposed around for the accommodation of the guests.

The steward at length appeared, and descended the steps to classify the

people for the intended homage, and to satisfy himself that none had obeyed the summons.

The tenantry were arranged in the following order:—

First—the steward and esquire stood on either side next the steps.

Then followed the vassals who held lands for watching and warding castle. These were considered superior to the other vassals, from the peculiar nature of their tenure, as the life-guards, as it were, of their lord.

Then those who held lands in chivalry, namely, by performing some military services, the perfection of whose tenures was homage.

The next were those who held lands by agricultural or rent service, who performed fealty as a memorial of their attachment and dependence.

The bondmen, or legally speaking, the villeins, concluded the array. These were either attached to the soil or to the person. The former were designated *villeins appendant*, because following the transfer of the ground like fixtures of a freehold, their persons, lands, and goods being the property of the lord; they might be chastised, but not maimed. They paid a fine on the marriage of females; who obtained their freedom on marriage with a free man, but returned again to bondage on surviving their husband. The latter class were called *villeins in gross*, and differed nothing from the others except in name; the term signifying that they were severed from the soil and followed the person of the lord. Neither of the classes were permitted to leave the lands of their owner; and on flight or settlement in town or cities, might be pursued and reclaimed. An action for damages lay against those who harboured them, or who refused to deliver them up,—the law also provided a certain form of writ by which the sheriff was commanded to seize, or obtain them by force. There was one mode, however, of nullifying the right of capture. If the runaway resided on lands of the king for a year and a day, without claim, he could not be molested for the future, although he was still liable, if caught beyond the precincts of the royal boundary, to be retaken.

The classification had just finished, when a door at the upper end of the hall was thrown open, and the Baron of Sudley entered, attended by several guests, and followed by a page.

Roland de Boteler was a man about six-and-twenty, of a tall, well-proportioned figure, with an open, handsome countenance: but there was a certain boldness or freedom in the laughing glance of his large black eyes and in the full parted lips, blended with an expression, which, though perhaps exactly haughty or cruel, yet told distinctly enough that he was perfectly regardless of the feelings of his dependants, and considered them merely as conducive to his amusement, or to the display of military power. A doublet of crimson cloth, embroidered with gold, was well chosen to advantage to his dark complexion. His tunic, composed of baudekin cloth of gold, was confined round the waist by a girdle, below which hung in full plaits, nearly to the knee,—thus allowing little of his thighs to be seen, of rich velvet, corresponding in colour with the doublet, to be seen over his dress he wore a surcoat or mantle of fine violet-coloured cloth fastened across the breast, with a gold clasp, and lined with minever. His hair, according to the fashion introduced by the Black Prince, who brought over his royal captive, John of France, fell in thick short curls by the sides of his face, in colour and material resembling his mantle, and edged with minever; and the lip and chin wore neither mustachio nor beard.

His eye fell proudly for a moment on the assembled yeomen, as he took his seat for the first time as Lord of Sudley; but speedily the ceremony commenced.

The individual first summoned from among the group, was a tall and young man of about twenty-five, with a complexion fair but reddened through exposure to the seasons. His hair was light-brown, thick

curly, and there was a good-humoured expression in the clear gray eyes, and in the full, broad, well-marked countenance, that would give one the idea of a gay, thoughtless spirit — had it not been for the bold and firm step, and the sudden change of feature from gay to grave as he advanced to the platform, and met unabashed the baron's scrutiny, at once indicating that the man possessed courage and decision when occasion required these qualities to be called into action.

Stephen Holgrave ascended the marble steps, and proceeded on till he stood at the baron's feet. He then unclasped the belt of his waist, and having his head uncovered, knelt down, holding up both his hands. De Boteler took them within his own, and the yeoman said, in a loud, distinct voice —

"Lord Roland de Boteler, I become your man from this day forward, of life and limb and earthly worship, and unto you shall be true and faithful, and bear to you faith, for the lands that I claim to hold of you, saving the faith that I owe unto our sovereign lord the king."

The baron then bent his head forward and kissed the young man's forehead; and unloosing his hands, Holgrave arose, and bending his head, stood to hear what De Boteler might say.

"You have spoken well, Holgrave," said De Boteler, looking good-humouredly upon the yeoman, "and, truly, if the life of Roland de Boteler is worth any thing, you have earned your reward; and, here, in the presence of this good company, I covenant for myself and my heirs, that you and your heirs, shall hold the land for ever, in chivalry, presenting, every feast of the Holy Baptist, a pair of gloves."

"Calverley," said the baron, as Holgrave retired, and while addressing his esquire his features assumed a peculiar expression: "What a pity it is that a yeoman should reap the reward of a service that *should* have been performed by you had your health permitted!"

The sarcastic smile that accompanied these words, called up a glow even deeper than envy had done; yet, in a calm voice, Calverley replied, "The land, my lord, though the gift be fair, is of little account in comparison with the honour of the deed; but I may humbly say, that if Thomas Calverley had witnessed his master's peril, he would have been found as valiant in his defence as the yeoman, whose better fortune it was to be present."

"Aye, aye, my good squire," said the baron, still in a laughing tone, "your illness, I am told, gave you a most outrageous appetite — doubtless your feeble constitution needed strengthening! Come, come, man, it is but a joke — never look so blank; yet, if we laugh, there is no reason why those knaves should stand grinning there from ear to ear. But the senior vassal advance."

The vassals who were to perform homage then prepared to go through the customary form; and an old gray-headed man advanced first from the group to do fealty, and, standing before the baron, pronounced after him the following oath, holding his right hand on the gospels:—

"I, John Hartwell, will be to you, my Lord Roland de Boteler, true and faithful, and bear to you fealty and faith for the lands and tenements which I hold of you; and I will truly do and perform the customs and services that I ought to do to you, so help me God!" The old man then kissed the book, and retired to give place to the next; and so on till all who owed fealty had gone through the ceremony.

Lastly advanced from among the bondmen, or villeins, the oldest servitor, and, holding his right hand over the book, pronounced after De Boteler —

"Hear you, my Lord de Boteler, that I, William Marson, from this day forth unto you shall be true and faithful, and shall owe you fealty for the land which I may hold of you in villeinage, and shall be justified by you

both in body and goods, so help me God and all the saints." After kissing the book he withdrew; and the bondmen successively renewed their servile compact.

While the vassals were retiring from the hall, the Lord de Boteler turned to the gentleman near him —

"Sir Robert," said he, "you saw that vassal who first did homage? — to that base-born churl I owe my life. I had engaged hand to hand with a French knight, when my opponent's esquire treacherously attacked me from behind. This was observed by my faithful follower, who struck down the coward with his axe, and, in a moment more, rid me of the knight by a blow that cleft his helmet and entered his brain. He also, by rare chance, I know not how, slew the bearer of that banner yonder, and, when the battle was over, laid it at my feet."

"You have made him a freeman since then?" inquired Sir Robert.

"No; he received his freedom from my father, when a boy, for some juvenile service — I hardly remember what. Yet I shall never forget the look of the varlet — as if it mattered to such as he whether they were free or not! He stared for an instant at my father — the tears trembling in his eyes, and all the blood in his body, I verily believe, reddening his face, and he looked as if he would have said something; but my father and I did not care to listen, and we turned away. As for the land he has now received, I promised it him on the field of battle, and I could not retract my word."

"No, baron," said Sir Robert; "the man earned it by his bravery; and surely the life of the Lord de Boteler is worth more than a piece of dirty land."

De Boteler, not caring to continue so uninteresting a subject, discoursed upon other matters; and the business of the morning having concluded, he retired with his guests from the hall.

It was about a fortnight after this court-day that the fortunate yeoman one morning led his mother, Edith Holgrave, to the cottage he had built on the land that was now his own.

Edith entered the cottage, her hand resting for support upon the shoulder of her son — for she was feeble, though not so much from age as from a weak constitution. As she stepped over the threshold she devoutly crossed herself; and when they stood upon the earthen floor, she withdrew her left hand from the arm that supported her, and, sinking upon her knees, and raising up her eyes, exclaimed —

"May He, in whose hands are the ends of the earth, preserve thee, my son, from evil. And oh! may He bless this house!"

While she spoke, her eyes brightened, and her pale face for a short time glowed with the fervour of her soul.

"Stephen, my son," she continued (as with his aid she arose and seated herself upon a wooden stool,) "many days of sorrow have I seen, but this proud day is an atonement for all. My father was a freeman, but *thy* father was a serf; — but all are alike in *His* eyes, who oftentimes gives the soul of a churl to him who dwelleth in castles, and quickens the body of the base of birth with a spirit that might honour the wearer of crimson and gold. My husband was a villein, but his soul spurned the bondage; and oftentimes, my son, when you have been an infant in my arms, thy father wished that the free-born breast which nourished you could infuse freedom into your veins. He did not live to see it; but oh! what a proud day was that for me, when my son no longer bore the name of slave! I had prayed — I had yearned for that day; and it at length repaid me for all the taunts of our neighbours, who reviled me because my spirit was not such as theirs!"

"Come, come, mother," interrupted Holgrave, "do n't agitate yourself; there is time to talk of all this by-and-by."

"And so there is, child — but I am old ; and the aged, as well as the young, love to be talking. Stephen, you must bear with your mother."

"Aye, that I will, mother," replied Holgrave, kissing her cheek, which had assumed its accustomed paleness ; "and ill befall the son that will not !"

Leaving his mother to attend to the visitors, who crowded in to drink success to the new proprietor in a cup of ale, Stephen Holgrave stole unobserved out of the cottage towards nightfall.

Passing through Winchcombe, he arrived at a small neat dwelling, in a little sequestered valley, about a quarter of a mile from the town — the tenant of which lowly abode is of no small consequence to our story.

Like Holgrave, Margaret was the offspring of the bond and the free. Her father had been a bondman attached to the manor of Sudley ; and her mother a poor friendless orphan, with no patrimony save her freedom. Such marriages were certainly of rare occurrence, because women naturally felt a repugnance to become the mother of serfs ; but still, that they did occur, is evidenced by the law of villeinage, ordaining that the children of a bondman and free woman should in no wise partake of their mother's freedom.

It might be, perhaps, that this similarity in their condition had attracted them towards each other ; or it might be that, as Margaret had been motherless since her birth, and Edith had nursed and reared her till she grew to womanhood, from the feelings natural to long association, love had grown and strengthened in Stephen's heart. Indeed, there were not many of her class who could have compared with this young woman. Her figure was about the middle height of her sex, and so beautifully proportioned, that even the close kerchief and russet gown could not entirely conceal the symmetrical formation of the broad white shoulders, the swelling bust, and the slender waist. Plain braids of hair of the darkest shade, and arched brows of the same hue, gave an added whiteness to a forehead smooth and high ; and her full intelligent eyes, with a fringe as dark as her hair, were of a clear deep blue. The feminine occupation of a sempstress had preserved the delicacy of her complexion, and had left a soft flickering blush playing on her cheek. Such was Margaret, the beloved — the betrothed — whom Holgrave was now hastening to invite, with all the simple eloquence of honest love, to become the bride of his bosom — the mistress of his home.

The duskiess of the twilight hour was lightened by the broad beams of an autumn moon ; and as the moonlight, streaming full upon the thatch, revealed distinctly the little cot that held his treasure, all the high thoughts of freedom and independence, all the wandering speculative dreamings that come and go in the heart of man, gave place, for a season, to one engrossing feeling. Margaret was not this evening, as she was wont to be, sitting outside the cottage door awaiting his approach. The door was partly opened — he entered — and beheld a man kneeling before her, and holding one of her hands within his own !

"Stephen Holgrave !" cried the devotee, jumping up, "what brings you here at such an hour ?"

"What brings me, Calverley ?" replied Holgrave, furiously, "who are you, to ask such a question ? What brings you here ?"

"My own will, Stephen Holgrave," answered Calverley in a calm tone ; "and mark you — this maiden has no right to plight her troth except with her lord's consent. She is Lord de Boteler's bondwoman, and dares not marry without his leave — which will never be given to wed with you."

"You talk boldly, sir, of my lord's intents," answered the yeoman sulkily.

"I speak but the truth," replied Calverley. "You have been rewarded

well for the deed you did ; and think not that your braggart speech will win my lord. This maid is no meet wife for such as you. My lord has offered me fair lands and her freedom if I choose to wed her : and though many a free dowered maid would smile upon the suit of Thomas Calverley, yet have I come to offer wedlock to Margaret."

"Margaret!" said Holgrave, fiercely, "can this be true? answer me! Has Calverley spoken of marriage to you? — why do you not answer? Have I loved a false one?"

"No, Stephen," replied Margaret, in a low trembling voice.

Holgrave's mind was relieved as Margaret spoke, for he had confidence in her truth. He knew, however, that Calverley stood high in the favour of De Boteler, and he determined not to trust himself with farther words.

"Margaret," said Calverley suddenly, "I leave Sudley Castle on the morrow to attend my lord to London. At my return I shall expect that this silence be changed into language befitting the chosen bride of the Baron de Boteler's esquire. Remember you are not yet free! — and now, Stephen Holgrave, I leave not this cottage till you depart. The maiden is my lord's nief, the cottage is his, and here I am privileged — not you."

Fierce retorts and bitter revilings were on Holgrave's tongue ; but the sanctuary of a maiden's home was no place for contention. He knew that Calverley did possess the power he vaunted ; and, without uttering a word, he crossed the threshold, and stood on the sod just beyond the door.

Calverley paused a moment gazing on the blanched beauty of the agitated girl, her cheek looking more pale from the moonlight that fell upon it ; and then, in the soft insinuating tone he knew so well how to assume —

"Forgive me, Margaret," said he, "for what I have said. But oh," he continued, taking her hand, and pressing it passionately to his bosom, "You know not how much I love you! — Come, sir, will you walk?" Then kissing the damsel's hand, he relinquished it ; and Margaret, with streaming eyes and a throbbing heart, watched till the two receding figures were lost in the distance.

Holgrave and Calverley pursued their path in sullen silence. There were about a dozen paces between them, but neither were one foot in advance of the other. On they went through Winchcombe and along the road, till they came to where a footpath from the left intersected the highway. Here they both, as if by mutual agreement, made a sudden pause, and stood doggedly eyeing each other. At considerably less than a quarter of a mile to the right was Sudley Castle ; and at nearly the same distance to the left was Holgrave's new abode. After the lapse of several minutes, Calverley leaped across a running ditch to the right ; and Holgrave, having thus far conquered, turned to the left on his homeward path.

The reader will, perhaps, feel some surprise that an esquire of the rich and powerful Lord de Boteler should be thus competing with the yeoman for the hand of a portionless humble nief ; but it is necessary to observe, in the first place, that in the fourteenth century esquires were by no means of the consideration they had enjoyed a century before. Some nobles, indeed, who were upholders of the ancient system, still regarded an esquire as but a degree removed from a knight, but these were merely exceptions ; — the general rule, at the period we are speaking of, was to consider an esquire simply as a principal attendant, without the least claim to any distinction beyond. Such a state of things accorded well with the temper of De Boteler ; — he could scarcely have endured the equality, which, in some measure, formerly subsisted between the esquire and his lord. With him the equal might be familiar, but the inferior must be submissive ; and it was, perhaps, the humility of Calverley's deportment that alone had raised him to the situation he now held. Calverley, besides, had none of the requisites

of respectability which would have entitled him to take a stand among a class such as esquires had formerly been.

About ten years before the commencement of our tale, a pale emaciated youth presented himself one morning at Sudley Castle, desiring the hospitality that was never denied to the stranger. Over his dress, which was of the coarse monks' cloth then generally worn by the religious, he wore a tattered cloak of the dark russet peculiar to the peasant. That day he was fed, and that night lodged at the castle; and the next morning, as he stood in a corner of the court-yard, apparently lost in reflection as to the course he should next adopt, the young Roland de Boteler, then a fine boy of fifteen, emerged from the stone archway of the stable mounted on a spirited charger. The glow on his cheek, the brightness of his eyes, and the youthful animation playing on his face, and ringing in the joyous tones of his voice, seemed to make the solitary dejected being, who looked as if he could claim neither kindred nor home, appear even more care-worn and friendless. The youth gazed at the young De Boteler, and ran after him as he rode through the gateway followed by two attendants.

He then wandered about with a look of still deeper despondence, till the trampling of the returning horses sent a transient tinge across his cheek. He followed Roland's attendants, and again entered the court-yard. By some chance, as the young rider was alighting, his eye fell on the dejected stranger, who was standing at a little distance fixing an anxious gaze upon the heir.

"Who is that sickly-looking carle, Ralph?" inquired De Boteler.

The attendant did not know. The youth interpreted the meaning of Roland's glance, and approached, and with an humble yet not ungraceful obeisance—

"Noble young lord," said he, "may a wanderer crave leave to abide for a time in this castle?"

"You have my leave," replied the boy, in the consequential tone that youth generally assumes when conferring a favour. "Indeed, you don't look very fit to wander farther;—Ralph, see that this knave is attended to."

The stranger was now privileged to remain, and a week's rest and good cheer considerably improved his appearance. He did not presume, however, to approach the part of the castle inhabited by the owners; but never did the young Roland enter the court-yard, or walk abroad, but the silent homage of the grateful stranger greeted him.

This strange youth was Thomas Calverley, and, by the end of a month, Roland's eyes as instinctively sought for him when he needed an attendant, as if he had been a regular domestic.

It was good policy in Calverley to propitiate the young De Boteler; for had he presented himself to his father, although for a space he might have been fed, he could never have presumed to obtrude himself upon his notice.

There was a humility in the stranger which pleased Roland's imperious temper; he had granted the permission by which he abided in the castle, and he seemed to feel a kind of interest in his protégé; and the envy of his attendants was often excited by their young lord beckoning to Calverley to assist him to mount, or alight, or do him any other little service. Calverley began now to be considered as a kind of inmate in the castle, and various were the whispered tales that went about respecting him. At length it was discovered that he was a scholar—that is, he could read and write; and the circumstance, though it abated nothing of the whisperings of idle curiosity, entirely silenced the taunts he had been compelled to endure. If still disliked, yet was he treated with some respect; for none of the unlettered domestics would have presumed to speak rudely to one so far above them in intellectual attainments.

Such a discovery could not long remain a secret ; — the tale reached the ears of young De Boteler, and, already prepossessed in his favour, it was but a natural consequence that Calverley should rise from being first an assistant, to be the steward, the page, and, at length, the esquire to the heir to the barony of Sudley. But the progress of his fortunes did but add to the malevolence of the detractor and the tale-bearer ; theft, sacrilege, and even murder, were hinted at as probable causes for a youth, who evidently did not belong to the vulgar, being thus a friendless outcast. But the most charitable surmise was, that he was the offspring of the unhallowed love of some dame or damsel who had reared him in privacy, and had destined him for the church ; and that either upon the death of his protectress, or through some fault, he had been expelled from his home. Calverley had a distant authoritative manner towards his equals and inferiors, which, despite every effort, checked inquisitiveness ; and all the information he ever gave was, that he was the son of a respectable artizan of the city of London, whom his father's death had left friendless. Whether this statement was correct or not, could never be discovered. Calverley was never known to allude to aught that happened in the years previous to his becoming an inmate of the castle : what little he had said was merely in reply to direct questions. It would seem, then, that he stood alone in the world, and such a situation is by no means enviable ; and although duplicity, selfishness, and tyranny, formed the principal traits in his character, and though independently of tyranny and selfishness, his mind instinctively shrunk from any contact, save that of necessity, with those beneath him, yet had he gazed upon the growing beauty of Margaret till a love pure and deep — a love in which was concentrated all the slumbering affections, had risen and expanded in his breast, until it had, as it were, become a part of his being.

Margaret had a brother — a monk in the abbey at Winchcombe, to whose care she was indebted for the instructions which had made her a skilful embroideress, and still more for the precautions which had preserved her opening beauty from the gaze of the self-willed Roland de Boteler. Though the daughter of a bondman, her services had never been demanded ; and father John had ultimately removed her from Edith's roof to the little cottage already mentioned.

Calverley had intended to see Margaret again before leaving the castle ; but De Boteler having changed the hour he had appointed, there was not a moment to spare from the necessary arrangements. Never before had Calverley's assumed equanimity of temper been so severely tried ; the patient attention with which he listened, and the prompt assiduity with which he executed a thousand trifling commands — although, from the force with which he bit his under-lip, he was frequently compelled to wipe away the blood from his mouth — showed the absolute control he had acquired over his feelings — at least so far as the exterior was concerned.

The chapel bell rang for mass, at which Father John, the brother of Margaret, officiated, in consequence of the sudden illness of the resident chaplain. Calverley waited till the service was concluded ; and then, first pausing a few minutes to allow the monk to recite the office, he unclosed the door of the sacristy and entered. Father John was sitting with a book in his hand, and he still wore the white surplice.

The ecclesiastic, on whose privacy Calverley had thus intruded, was a man about thirty-five, of a tall muscular figure, with thick dark hair encircling his tonsure, a thin visage, and an aquiline nose. There was piety and meekness in the high pale forehead ; and in the whole countenance, when the eyes were cast down, or when their light was partly shaded by the lids and the projecting brows : but when the lids were raised, and the large, deeply-set eyes flashed full upon the object of his scrutiny, there was

a proud — a searching expression in the glance, which had often made the obdurate sinner tremble, and which never failed to awe presumption and extort respect. Such was the man whom Calverley was about to address; and from whose quiet, unassuming demeanour at this moment, a stranger would have augured little opposition to any reasonable proposal that might be suggested: but Calverley well knew the character of the monk, and there was a kind of hesitation in his voice as he said —

“Good morrow, holy father.”

The monk silently bent his head.

“My Lord de Boteler,” resumed Calverley, “will, in a few minutes, depart hence. I attend him; but before I go, I would fain desire your counsel.”

“Speak on, my son,” said the monk, in a full deep voice, as Calverley paused.

“Father John, you have a sister —”

“What of her?” asked the monk, looking inquiringly on the esquire.

“I love her!” replied Calverley, his hesitation giving place to an impassioned earnestness. — “Why look you so much astonished? Has she not beauty, and have I not watched the growth of that beauty from the interesting loveliness of a child, to the full and fascinating charms of a woman. Father John, you have never loved — you cannot tell the conflict that is within my heart.”

“But,” asked the monk, “have you spoken to Margaret?”

“Last evening I went to give her freedom and to ask her love, when Stephen Holgrave —”

“Did the baron empower you to free her?” eagerly asked the monk.

“Yes, — but Holgrave entered and —”

“She is still a nief?”

“Yes; — when that knave Holgrave entered, I could not speak of what was burning in my breast.”

“Stephen Holgrave is not a knave,” returned the monk. “He is an honest man, and Margaret is betrothed to him.”

There was a momentary conflict in Calverley’s breast as the monk spoke; — there was a shade across his brow, and a slight tremor on his lip; but he conquered the emotion — love triumphed, and, in a soft imploring tone, he said —

“Think you, father, Holgrave loves her as I do; or think you his rude untutored speech will accord well with so gentle a creature. Oh! father John, be you my friend. Bid her forget the man who is unworthy of her! She will listen to you — she will be guided by you — you are the only kinsman she can claim; — and surely even you must wish rather to see your sister attended almost as a mistress in this castle, than the harassed wife of a laborious yeoman. Oh! if you win her to my arms, I here swear to you, that not even your own heart could ask for more gentle care than she will receive from me. My happiness centres in her — to love her, to cherish her — to see the smile of joy for ever on her lips.”

At this moment a knock was heard at the door. Calverley opened it, and De Boteler’s page appeared, to say, that if Thomas Calverley had wanted the aid of the priest, he should have applied sooner, for his lord was now waiting for him.

“Tell my lord,” said Calverley, “I will attend him instantly.”

The page withdrew, and Calverley, turning to the monk, asked hastily if he might reckon on his friendship.

“Thomas Calverley,” replied John, “I believe you do love my sister, but I cannot force her inclinations; — I will not even strive to bias her mind; there is a sympathy in hearts predestined to unite, which attracts them towards each other; — if that secret sympathy exist not between you, ye are not destined to become as one.”

"Then you will not seek to win her to my love," asked Calverley, impatiently.

"I will tell her," returned the monk, "that a love so devoted, so disinterested, deserves in return an affection as pure: but if, after all this, her heart still prefers the yeoman Holgrave, I will say no more."

"And, think you, I shall endure rejection without an effort?"

"It is now too late! Why, if your happiness rested upon her, did you defer declaring your love till the moment when she had promised to become the wife of another? Know you not, Thomas Calverley, that even as the rays of the bright sun dissolve the glittering whiteness of the winter snow, just so do kind words and patient love enkindle warm feelings in the bosom of the coldest virgin, and awaken sympathies in her heart that else might for ever unconsciously have slumbered."

"You talk strange language," replied Calverley, in a voice that had lost all its assumed gentleness. "But — *remember* — I have not sought your sister's love to be thus baffled — *remember!* —" Calverley was here interrupted by a quick knocking at the door.

"Remember, father John," he continued, pausing ere he unclosed the door, and speaking rapidly, "that mine is not the love of a boy — that Thomas Calverley is not one whom it is *safe* to trifle with — that Margaret is a bondwoman — and that her freedom is in my hands — *remember!*"

He repeated the last word in a tone of menace, and with a look that seemed to dare the monk to sanction the union of his sister with Holgrave. He opened the door, but, ere he passed through, his eye caught an expression of proud contempt flashing in the dark hazel eyes, and curving in the half-smiling lip of the man he had thus defied; — and prudence whispered, that he had not properly estimated the character of the priest.

CHAPTER II.

It was on a lovely October morning that the travellers returned to Sudley. The whole region of the sky was of so clear and deep a blue, that it seemed as if the pure cold breath of the morning had driven every cloud and vapour far from the skies of merry England. The sun shone brightly upon the yet green meadows, upon the hedges, and upon the trees with their broad branches, and their scanty brown leaves: the birds, rejoicing in the sunlight, were singing hymns of grateful melody, as they darted among the branches, or sailed and curved in the blue ether. Our fair Margaret, sympathizing in the gladness of nature, could almost have sung in concert with the feathered choir, as she tripped along with the light step that indicates a cheerful heart. She had just reached that point of the Winchcombe road where the green lane, turning to the left, led directly to her home, when, catching a glimpse of an approaching figure, she raised her eyes and beheld — Calverley.

Whether Calverley's quick glance had caught the marriage ring upon her uncovered finger, or, whether the basket on her arm, together with the circumstance of her being abroad at an hour that used to be devoted to her needle, told him she was no longer a thing to be thought of with hope, or looked on with love, it is difficult to say; but he stood suddenly still, and his cheeks and his lips became pale — almost livid. Margaret turned and walked hastily down the path, her pallid cheek and trembling limbs alone telling that she had recognised Calverley. He stood silently gazing after her, till a winding in the path shut her out from his view. He then walked rapidly on to Winchcombe, entered the first vintner's he came to, and, to the surprise of

the host, who knew Master Calverley to be a sober man, called for a measure of wine, drank it off at a draught, and throwing down the money, departed as abruptly as he came. In a few minutes after, he entered the room of old Luke, the steward of Sudley Castle.

"Master Luke," said he, with an assumed carelessness of manner, "you are rather chary of my lord's wine—you have not yet offered me the cup of welcome."

"I ask your pardon, Calverley," replied the steward, "but you so seldom care for wine, that one hardly thinks of offering it to you: here, however, is a cup that will do your heart good."

Calverley took the cup, and drinking it off with as much zest as if he had not already tasted wine that morning—"Any news?" said he, "master Luke—any news?"

"Not much, squire.—Stephen Holgrave, indeed, has got married, and, I'll warrant me, there will be a fine to-do about it; for he has married a *nief*, and you know my lord is very particular about these matters:—he told me, no longer ago than just before he went away this last time, that he would not abate a jot of his due, in the marriages or services of his bond-folk. To be sure the lass is sister of the monk who now shrives the castle, and, as my lord thinks much of Holgrave, it may all blow over."

"Who married them?" asked Calverley, in a stifled voice.

"Oh! Father John, to be sure—nobody else—"

"Did he!" said Calverley, in a voice that made the old man start; but, before the astonished steward could reply, he burst from the room. None of the inmates of the castle saw him again during the remainder of that day.

When he appeared before De Boteler the next morning, such a change had twenty hours of mental suffering produced in his countenance, that his lord, struck by the alteration, inquired if he were ill. Calverley said something about a fall that had partly stunned him, but assured De Boteler he was now perfectly well. While he yet spoke, the steward entered, to say that Stephen Holgrave had come to crave his lordship's pardon for marrying a *nief* without leave, and also to pay the merchant.

"Married a *nief*! has he?" returned De Boteler. "By my faith I thought the kern had too proud a stomach to wed a *nief*. I thought he had no such love for villeinage. I do not like those intermarriages. Were free maidens so scarce that this Holgrave could not find a wife among them?"

Calverley slightly coloured as De Boteler spoke; he knew his lord was no admirer of people stepping in the least out of their way, and it seemed probable it was to him he alluded, when he expressed his dislike of unequal marriages.

"Why, my lord," said Luke, in reply to De Boteler's interrogatory, "there is hardly a free maiden in the parish that would not have been glad of Stephen; but, though I have never seen her, I am told this wife of his is the comeliest damsel between this and Winchcombe: and, besides, she is not like a common *nief*—and then, my lord, she is the sister of the good monk John."

"Father John's sister, is she?" asked the baron. "Why then my good esquire here has more to do with the matter than I—but however, Luke, go tell Holgrave I cannot attend to him now.—Why, Calverley," continued De Boteler, when the steward had withdrawn, "is not this the maiden you spoke to me about? Do not turn so pale, man, but answer me."

"Yes, my lord," replied Calverley.

"And did this Holgrave dare to wed a *nief* of mine!—when I had ready disposed of her freedom and her hand?"

"Yes, my lord."

"By my faith, the knave is bold to thwart me thus."

"My lord," said Calverley; "the evening before you left the castle for London, I went to the maiden's cottage to ask her hand; Holgrave immediately came in, and I then distinctly told him that your lordship had given me the maiden's freedom, and also had consented that I should wed her, and yet; you see what regard he has paid to your will!"

"Yes, this is the gratitude of these base-born vassals, but, Calverley, what priest presumed to wed them?"

"The monk John."

"What! the wife's brother! He who has attended the chapel since the death of the late good father?"

"Yes, my lord."

"By heaven! they seem all conspiring to set my will at naught! — he, at least, should have better known what was due to the lord of this castle."

"The monk," replied Calverley, "was not ignorant of my lord's will: and it vexes me, not on my own account, for it was merely a passing fancy; but it vexes me, that this proud, stubborn priest, while he is eating of your bread, and drinking of your cup, should, in the teeth of your commands, do that which I could swear no other priest would have dared to do; it ill becomes him to preach obedience, who —"

"True, true, I will see to him — he shall answer for what he has done — but now Calverley, tell me honestly, for you are not wont to be familiar even with your fellows — tell me what you saw in this maiden that could make you wish to rival Stephen Holgrave?"

"Her beauty, my lord."

"What! is she so fair?"

"My lord, I have seldom looked upon one so fair. In my judgment she was the loveliest I ever saw in these parts."

"Say you so!" returned De Boteler. "I should like to see this boasted beauty, only if it were to convince me of your taste in these matters. Calverley, order one of the varlets to go to Holgrave, and desire him to come to the castle directly — and, mind you, he brings his wife with him."

Calverley could scarcely repress a smile of exultation as the baron delivered this command, but composing his countenance to its general calm expression, he bowed to De Boteler, and immediately withdrew.

Holgrave, when the henchman delivered the baron's command, hesitated, and looked angrily to Margaret.

"What ails thee, my son," asked Edith. "Is she not thy wife? — and can the baron break asunder the bonds that bind ye? — or dost thou fear that Margaret's face may please him — and that he would strive to take from the man who saved his life in the battle, the wife of his bosom! Shame! shame!"

"No, no, mother," returned Holgrave, musing; "yet I would rather she should not go to the castle — I have seen more of the baron than you: and, besides, this Calverley —"

Holgrave, however, considering it better not to irritate the baron by a refusal, at length consented that Margaret should accompany him, and they quitted the cottage together.

"Come hither, Holgrave," said De Boteler, as Holgrave entered. "Is this your wife?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the yeoman, with an humble reverence.

"Look up, pretty one," said De Boteler to Margaret! — "Now, by my faith, Holgrave, I commend your choice. I wonder not that such a prize was contended for. Margaret, — I believe that is your name? Look up! and tell me in what secret place you grew into such beauty?"

Margaret raised her bright blue eyes, that had been as yet hidden by the long dark lashes, and the downcast lids; but, meeting the bold fixed gaze

of the baron, they were instantly withdrawn, and the deep blush of one unaccustomed to the eyes of strangers suffused her cheek and brow, and even her neck.

"Were you reared on this barony, Margaret?" resumed the baron.

"Yes, my lord," answered Margaret, modestly, raising her eyes: "my mother was a freeman's daughter; my father was a bondman on this land: they died when I was but a child; and Edith Holgrave reared me till I grew up a girl and could work for myself — and then —"

"You thought you could not do better than wed her son through gratitude. That was well — and so this good squire of ours could not expect to find much favour in your eyes. But, do you not know, you should not have wedded without my consent?"

"My lord," answered Holgrave; "I beg your pardon; but I thought your lordship would n't think much of the marriage, as your lordship was not at the castle, and I did not know when you would return. Here is the merchet, my lord, and I hope you will forgive me for not awaiting your return."

"I suppose I must, for there is no helping it now; and by my faith, it is well you did not let me see that pretty face before you were wedded — but take back the merchet," he continued, waving back with his hand the money which Holgrave was presenting. "Keep it. An orphan bride seldom comes rich; and here is a trifle to add to it, as a token that De Boteler prizes beauty — even though it be that of a bondwoman!" As he spoke, he held a broad piece of gold towards Holgrave.

"Not so, my lord," said Holgrave, suffering the coin to remain between De Boteler's fingers. — "Not so, my lord. I take back the merchet with many thanks, but I crave your pardon for not taking your gold. I have no need of gold — I did not wed Margaret for dower — and with your lordship's leave I pray you excuse my taking it."

"As you please, unthankful kern," replied the baron, haughtily. "De Boteler forces his gifts upon no one — here," he continued, throwing the piece to an attendant, who stood behind his chair — "*you* will not refuse it." He then turned round to the table, and commenced a game at cards, without further noticing Holgrave. The yeoman stood a few minutes awaiting the baron's pleasure, but perceiving he did not heed him, presently took Margaret's hand, and making a low obeisance, retired.

When the game was finished, De Boteler threw down the cards.

"Calverley," said he, "think you that this Margaret loves her husband?" A slight shade passed over Calverley's cheek as he answered,

"I should hardly think so, my lord. She is — her temper is very gentle — Holgrave is passionate, and rude, and —"

"It is a pity she should be the wife of such a carle" — mused his lord.

That afternoon De Boteler, throwing a plain dark cloak over his rich dress, left the castle, took the path that led to Holgrave's abode, and raising the latch, entered the cottage.

Margaret was sitting near the window at needlework, and Edith, in her high-backed arm-chair, was knitting in the chimney-corner. Margaret, blushing deeply, started from her seat as her eyes so unexpectedly encountered those of the baron.

"Keep your seat, pretty dame," said De Boteler. "That is a stout silk. For whom are you working these bright colours?"

"It is a stole for my brother, the monk, my lord," replied Margaret in a tremulous voice.

"Your work is so beautiful," returned De Boteler, looking at the silk, "that I wish you could find time to embroider a tabard for me."

"My lord," replied Edith, rising from her seat, and stepping forward a few paces, "Margaret Holgrave has little leisure from attending to the

household of her husband. There are abundance of skilful sempstresses ; and surely the Baron de Boteler would not require this young woman to neglect the duty she has taken upon herself."

De Boteler looked at Edith an instant with a frown, as if about to answer fiercely ; but after a moment he inquired calmly,

"Does your son find his farm answer, dame?"

"Yes, my lord, with many thanks to the donor. Stephen has all he can wish for in this farm."

"That is well," returned De Boteler ; and then, after a momentary but earnest gaze at Margaret, he turned away and left the cottage.

Holgrave entered soon after the baron's departure. Margaret strove to meet him with a smile ; but it was not the sunny glow, that usually greeted his return. He detected the effort ; nay, as he bent down to kiss her cheek, he saw that she trembled.

"What ails you, Margaret?" inquired he tenderly. "You are not well?"

"O yes," replied Margaret. "I am perfectly well, but—I have been a little frightened."

"By whom? Calverley?"

"No ; his master."

"The baron ! Surely, Margaret—"

"Oh ! Stephen," said Margaret, alarmed at the sudden fierceness his countenance assumed. "Indeed he said no harm. Did he, mother?"

"No," replied Edith, "and if he had, Stephen, your wife knew how to answer him as befitting a virtuous woman."

"It was well," replied Holgrave ; "I am a freeman, and may go where I list, and not King Edward himself shall insult a freeman's wife !—but do not weep, Margaret. I am not angered with you."

That evening De Boteler spoke little during supper, and while drinking the second cup after the repast, he desired the page who stood behind his chair, to order the monk John to attend him directly. Father John presently appeared, and approaching the foot of the table, made a low obeisance, and then with his hands crossed on his bosom, and with eyes cast down, awaited till De Boteler should address him. De Boteler looked for a moment earnestly at the monk, ere in a stern voice he said :

"Father John, know you not why I have sent for you?"

"My lord, I await your pleasure," replied the monk submissively.

"Await my pleasure !" replied the Baron scornfully. "Did you consider my pleasure, monk, when you presumed to set at naught my prerogatives?"

"My lord," answered the monk, still mildly, though in a firmer tone than he had before spoken ; "My Lord de Boteler, servants must obey their masters."

"Hypocrite !" interrupted the baron, in a voice that resounded through the hall. "Did you consider the obedience due to a master when you presumed to dispose of a bondwoman of mine, without my sanction—nay, even in direct opposition to my will? Answer me. Did you consider the order of dependence then?"

"Baron of Sudley," replied the monk, in a voice which, though scarcely elevated above the ordinary pitch of colloquial discourse, was nevertheless in that clear distinct tone which is heard at a considerable distance—"Baron of Sudley, I am no hypocrite, neither have I forgotten to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. If I pronounced the nuptial benediction over a bondwoman and a freeman without your lordship having consented, it was because you had first violated the trust reposed in you. You are a master to command obedience, but only in things that are not sinful ; yet would you sinfully have compelled a maiden to swear at the holy altar

of God to love and honour a man whom her soul abhorred. It was because you would have done this, that I, as the only being besides your lordship who could —”

“Insolent priest!” interrupted De Boteler, “do you dare to justify what you have done? Now, by my faith, if you had with proper humility acknowledged your fault and sued for pardon — pardon you should have had. But now, you leave this castle instantly. I will teach you that De Boteler will yet be master of his own house, and his own vassals. And here I swear (and the Baron of Sudley uttered an imprecation) that for your meddling knavery, no priest or monk shall ever again abide here. If the varlets want to shrive, they can go to the abbey; and if they want to hear mass, a priest can come from Winchcombe. But never shall another of your meddling fraternity abide at Sudley while Roland de Boteler is its lord.”

“Calverley,” he continued, turning to the squire, who stood at a distance, enjoying the mortification of the monk — “Calverley, see that the priest quits the castle — remember — instantly!”

The monk, for the first time, fully raised his eyes, and casting upon the baron a momentary glance of reproach, turned, without speaking, from the table. He walked on a few steps towards the door, and then stopping suddenly, as if recollecting that Calverley had orders to see him depart, he turned round, and looking upon the squire, who was almost at his side, he said in a stern voice, and with a frowning brow, “I go in obedience to your master; but even obedience to your master is not to be enforced upon a servant of the Lord by such as *you*. Of my own will I go forth; but not one step further do I proceed till you retire!”

There was that in the voice and look of the monk, which made Calverley involuntarily shrink; and receiving at the same instant a glance from De Boteler, he withdrew to the upper end of the room; and Father John, with a dignified step, passed on through the hall, and across the court-yard, and giving a blessing to the guard at the principal gate, who bent his knee to receive it, he went forth, having first shaken the dust from his sandals.

The next morning, when his lord had released him from attendance, Calverley, little satisfied with the progress of his vengeance, left the castle, and walked on to meditate alone more uninterruptedly on the canker-worm within.

He had not proceeded far along his path, when the heavy tread of a man on the rustling leaves, caused him to raise his eyes, and he saw a short, thickset figure, in gray woollen hose, and a vest of coarse medley cloth reaching no higher than the collar-bone, hastening onward. A gleam of hope lighted Calverley’s face as he observed this man.

“What is the matter this morning, Byles?” said he, “you look troubled.”

Byles looked at Calverley for an instant, perfectly astonished at his condescension.

“Troubled!” replied he — “no wonder. My farm is bad; and —”

“It is a poor farm,” said Calverley hastily; “but there are many fine farms that have lately reverted to my lord in default of heirs, or as forfeitures, that must soon be given away or sold.”

“But, Master Calverley, what is that to me?” said Byles, looking with some surprise at the squire — “you know I am a friendless man, and have not wherewithal to pay the fine the steward would demand for the land. No, no, John Byles is going fast down the hill.”

“Don’t despair, Byles — there is Holgrave — he was once poorer than you — take heart, some lucky chance may lift you up the hill again. I dare say this base-born I have named thinks himself better now than the free-born honest man.”

"Ay, that he does, squire: to be sure he does n't say any thing; but then he thinks the more; and, besides, he never comes into the alehouse when his work is done, to take a cheering draught like other men. No, no, he is too proud for that; but home he goes, and whatever he drinks he drinks at his own fireside."

For a moment Calverley's brow contracted; but striving to look interested for the man he wished to conciliate, he replied, "Yes, Byles, it is a pity that a good-hearted yeoman like you should not prosper as well as a mere mushroom. Now, Byles, I know you are a discreet man, and I will tell you a piece of news that nobody about the barony has yet heard. My lord is going to be married — yes, Byles, he leaves Sudley in a few days and goes again to London, and he will shortly return with a fair and noble mistress for the castle."

"We shall have fine doings then," said Byles, in an animated tone, and with a cheerful countenance; not that the news was of particular moment to him, but people love to be told news; and, besides, the esquire's increasing familiarity was not a little flattering.

"Oh, yes," replied Calverley; "there will be fine feasting, and I will see, Byles, that you do not lack the best. Who knows but your dame may yet nurse the heir of this noble house."

"I am afraid not, — many thanks to you; John Byles is not thought enough of in this barony — no, it is more likely Holgrave's wife, if she has any children, will have the nursing."

"What! Margaret Holgrave? — never" — said Calverley, with such a look and tone, that the yeoman started, and felt convinced, that what he had heard whispered about the esquire's liking for Margaret was true: "but, however," added Calverley, in a moment recovering his self-possession, "do not despair, Byles. My lord tells me I shall replace old Luke as steward in a few months, and if I do, there is not a vassal I should be more inclined to favour than you; for I see, Byles, there is little chance of your doing good unless you have a friend; for you are known to the baron as an idle fellow, and not over-scrupulous of telling a falsehood. Nay, my man, do n't start, I tell you the truth."

"Well, but squire, how could the baron hear of this?"

"Perhaps Stephen Holgrave could answer —"

"The base-born kern," replied Byles, fiercely; "he shall answer —"

"I do n't say he told the baron," said Calverley; "but I believe Holgrave loves to make everybody look worse than himself; and to be plain with you, John Byles, I love him not."

"No sir, I believe you have little reason to love him any more than other people —"

"Byles," interrupted Calverley, speaking rapidly, "you are poor — you are in arrear with your rent; a distress will be levied, and then what will become of you — of your wife and the little one? Listen to me! I will give you money to keep a house over your head; and when I am steward, you shall have the first farm at my lord's disposal, if you will only aid me in my revenge! Revenge!" he repeated, vehemently — "but you hesitate — you refuse."

"Nay, nay, squire, I do n't refuse: your offer is too tempting for a man in my situation to refuse; but you know —"

"Well," interrupted Calverley, with a contemptuous smile — "well, well, Byles, I see you prefer a jail for yourself, and beggary and starvation for your wife and child. Aye — perhaps to ask bread from Stephen Holgrave."

"Ask bread from him! — of the man who crows over us all, and who has told my lord that I am a liar! No, no, I would sooner die first. I

thank you for your kindness, Master Calverley, and I will do any thing short of——”

“Oh, you need not pause,” interrupted Calverley, “I do not want you to do him any bodily harm.”

“Don’t you? — oh! well, then, John Byles is yours,” said he, with a brightening countenance: “for you see I don’t mind saying any thing against such a fellow as he.”

“Yes, Byles, and especially since you will not be asked to say it for nothing,” returned Calverley with a slight sarcastic smile; but immediately assuming a more earnest and friendly tone, he continued, “I have promised you gold, and gold you shall have. I will befriend you to the utmost of my power, and you know my influence is not small at the castle; but you must swear to be faithful. Here,” said he, stooping down and taking up a rotten branch that lay at his feet, and breaking it in two, he placed it in the form of a cross; “here, Byles, swear by this cross to be faithful.” Byles hesitated for an instant, and then, in rather a tremulous voice, swore to earn faithfully his wages of sin.

It was nearly four months subsequent to the departure of De Boteler from the castle, ere Byles proceeded to earn the gold which had, in some measure, set him to rights with the world. It was about the middle of March; — the morning had risen gloomily, and, from a dense mass of clouds, a slow heavy rain continued to pour during the whole of the day. “Sam,” said Byles to a servitor, a faithful stupid creature, with just sufficient intellect to comprehend and obey the commands of his master, — “Sam, if this rain continues, we must go to work to-night?”

The rain did continue, and, after Byles had supped, he sat at the fire for two or three hours, and scarcely spoke. His countenance was troubled; — the deed he had promised to do — which he had contemplated with almost indifference — was now about to be accomplished; and he felt how different it is to dwell upon the commission of a thing, and actually to do it. Frequent draughts of ale, however, in some measure restored the tone of his nerves; and, as the evening wore away, he rose from the fire, and, opening the door, looked out at the weather. A thick drizzling rain still fell; the moon was at the full; and though the heavy clouds precluded the possibility of her gladdening the earth, yet even the heavy clouds could not entirely obscure her light; — there was a radiance spread over the heavens, which, though wanting the brightness of moonlight, was nevertheless equal and shadowless.

“T is a capital night,” said Byles, as he looked up at the sky in a tone of soliloquy; “I could not have wished for a better — just light enough to see what we are about, and not enough to tell tales. Sam,” continued he, closing the door and sitting again at the fire, “bring me the shafts, and let me look if the bow is in order.”

The serving man took from a concealed place a couple of arrows, and a stout yew-tree bow, and handed them to his master.

“You did well, Sam, in getting these shafts from Holgrave. You put the quiver up safe? — there is no fear of his missing them?”

“I should think not, master. It would be hard if he missed two out of four-and-twenty.”

“Mary,” said Byles, addressing his wife, “put something over the casement, lest if, by chance, any body should be abroad, they may see that we are up; — and now, bring me the masks. Never fear, Mary, nobody is out such a night as this. Now Sam,” he continued, “fetch the hand-barrow, and let us away.”

Mary began to tremble; — she caught her husband by the arm, and said something in a low and tremulous voice. As the fire revealed her face, Byles started at the strange paleness it exhibited.

"What ails you, Mary?" said he. "Have you not all along urged me to this? and now, after taking Calverley's gold, and spending it, and signing the bond, you want me to stand still! No, no, I must go to the Chase this night, were I sure to be hung to-morrow morning!" He then pushed her away with some violence, and the servitor preceding him, he passed over the threshold and closed the door.

They entered the Chase — and the wind, as it came in sudden gusts through the branches of the tall trees, gave an air of deeper gloom to the night. Frequently they paused and listened, as if fearful of being discovered; and then, when convinced that no human being was near, hastened on to the spot where the deer usually herded at night. A deep ravine, ten or twelve feet in breadth, intersected the Chase at a few paces from the enclosure; and about a stone's throw to the right of this enclosure stood the dwelling of the keeper.

"Sam," said Byles, "is not that a light in the cottage?"

"Yes, master, but I think they are in bed, and maybe have forgotten to rake the ashes over the fire."

"It may be so," answered Byles, doubtfully; "keep in the shade of the trees, and let us stop a while — I do not much like this light." They watched the cottage anxiously, and, in about twenty minutes, the light disappeared.

"Sam," said Byles, "I believe you were right — that last faint flicker, I doubt not, came from the dying embers. Creep softly to the enclosure, and gently rustle the brushwood. Do'n't let them see you. Softly — there — go on."

Byles drew his shaft from beneath his garment, and fixed it in the bow as Sam crept into the enclosure and did what he was ordered. The animals started on their legs, and stretched their heads forward in various directions, as if to ascertain whence the danger seemed to threaten.

"Down, Sam, a little to the left," whispered Byles, as a noble buck bounded forward towards the servitor, who had sheltered himself so as to avoid being seen by the animal. Sam dropped on the drenched grass to avoid the shaft that now sped from the bow of the marksman. The arrow entered the neck of the affrighted creature, as, for an instant, it stood with upraised head, its lofty antlers touching the branches. It then bounded forward, but, in its giddy effort to clear the obstruction of the opposing chasm, fell gasping among the brushwood that lined the sides of the ravine.

"Confound him, he has escaped us!" exclaimed Byles. See the whole herd scudding off, as if the hounds were in full cry at their heels. But forward, Sam, and creep to the edge, for he may not have fallen into the stream."

Sam obeyed; but whether owing to his trepidation or the slippery surface of the earth, he lost his footing and disappeared, uttering a cry of terror. Byles stood for an instant, irresolute whether to advance to the succour of his servitor, or leave him behind, for he apprehended that the cry would arouse the guardians of the Chase. Recollecting, however, that it would be as dangerous to abandon him as to attempt his extrication, he rushed forward to the spot where Sam had disappeared. The man had, in his fall, grasped the root of a tree from which the late heavy rains had washed the earth, and he lay suspended midway down. Byles hastily threw him a rope, with which he had intended to bind the animal on the barrow, and, with some difficulty, succeeded in dragging him up.

The dying throes of the buck recalled Byles to the object of his journey; and they were about making an effort to extricate the animal from the brushwood, when the servitor's eye caught the gleam of a light in the cottage.

"It's all over," said Byles, in a disappointed tone; "but the arrow may

answer our purpose where it is. Take up the barrow and fly, but keep in the shade of the trees."

A quick knock aroused Mary from her seat at the fire. She approached the door on tiptoe, and hesitated a moment ere she unclosed it; but the rapid breathings of Byles relieved her alarm, and she opened it hastily. A pale, haggard look met her eyes as her husband rushed in. "Fasten the door, Mary," said he—"haste, quench the fire. Here, put these wet clothes in the hiding place"—stripping himself of his garments—"and when you have done, hasten to bed. I am afraid they have overtaken poor Sam."

"Oh!" said Mary, dropping the clothes and staggering to a seat—"oh! Byles, Byles, we are lost! What will become of us! Sam will tell all!"

"Hold your tongue, woman," said Byles, jumping out of the bed into which he had thrown himself, and taking up the clothes, concealed them in the pit. "Do you want to have me hanged? To bed, I tell you."

She tremblingly obeyed, and Byles listened with breathless anxiety for the signal that would assure him of his servant's safety. At length a foot-step and a low tap at the door summoned Byles from his bed. "Who is there?" said he.

"Hasten, master, open the door," answered the servitor.

"All is well; Sam is returned!" He opened the door, and the servitor, panting with fear and fatigue, threw the barrow on the floor.

"That's right, Sam; there is nothing left to tell we have been in the Chase to-night. Now hasten to bed as quickly as you can. You shall have a new suit at Easter for this night's business. But Master Calverley will not be well pleased that the buck was not lodged in Holgrave's barn. However, it cannot be helped now."

CHAPTER III.

It was a fair morning in the June succeeding Holgrave's marriage, that Sudley Castle presented a greater degree of splendour than it had exhibited for some years before. Roland de Boteler had wedded a noble maiden, and it was expected that the castle would that day be graced by the presence of its future mistress.

There was a restless anxiety that morning, in every inhabitant of the castle, from old Luke, the steward, who was fretting and fidgeting lest the lady should consider him too old for the stewardship, to the poor varlet who fed the dogs, and the dirty nief who scoured the platters. This anxiety increased when a messenger arrived to announce that the noble party were on the road from Oxford, and might be expected in a few hours: and when at length a cloud of dust was observed in the distance, old Luke, bare-headed, and followed by the retainers and domestics, went forth to greet, with the accustomed homage, De Boteler and his bride.

The graceful Isabella de Vere was seated on a white palfrey, and attired in a riding-dress of green velvet, while a richly embroidered mantle of the same material, trimmed with minever, fell from her shoulders, and in some measure concealed the emblazoned housing that ornamented the beautiful animal on which she rode. A pyramidal cap of green satin, with a long veil of transparent tissue flowing from the point, and falling so as partly to shadow and partly to reveal the glow of her high-born beauty, was the only head-gear worn that day by the daughter of the Earl of Oxford, and the new baroness of Sudley.

On her right hand rode her husband, clad in a tunic of fine cloth, in colour

resembling the habit of his lady, and mounted on a dark, fiery charger, which with difficulty he could rein in to the slow pace of the palfrey. On the left of the lady Isabella was her brother, young Robert de Vere, and though but a boy, one might have read much in the lines of that countenance, of his future destiny. His smooth dimpled chin was small and round, and his mouth possessed that habitual smile, that softly beaming expression, which won for him in after years the regard of the superficial Richard; while there shone a fire in the full dark eyes, which betokened the ambitious spirit that was to animate the future lord of Dublin and sovereign of Ireland.

Sparkling with jewels, and attired in a white satin robe, the Lady de Boteler took her seat for the first time at the table of her lord, and well was she calculated to grace the board. Her person, tall and well formed, possessed that fulness of proportion which is conveyed by the term majestic; and her movements were exceedingly graceful. She had fine auburn hair, and the thick curls that fell beneath the gemmed fillet encircling her head, seemed alternately a bright gold or a dark brown according to the waving of the tress. Her fair and high white forehead, which the parted curls revealed, possessed sufficient beauty to have redeemed even irregular features from the charge of homeliness; but Isabella de Vere's face was altogether as generally faultless as falls to the lot of woman.

The guests were numerous, and the evening passed away in feasting and revelry. The blaze of the lights—the full strains of the minstrels—the glad faces and graceful motions of the dancers, the lustre of the ladies' jewels, and the glitter of the gold embroidery on the dresses of male and female, combined to give to the spacious hall that night more the appearance of a fairy scene, which might dissolve in a moment into air, than a palpable human festivity. The tenantry had also their feasting and their dancing; but these had to pay for their amusement: each tenant, according to the custom of the manor, on the marriage of their lord, being obliged to bring an offering in proportion to the land which he held.

On the morrow, accordingly, the vassals brought their presents. The lady Isabella, surrounded by visitors and attended by her handmaidens, was seated in the spacious apartment intended for the ceremony, as Edith, supported by Margaret, entered the room. The baroness raised her head and gazed upon the latter, with that complacent feeling which beauty seldom fails to inspire. The delicate hue of Margaret's cheek was, at this moment, deepened by embarrassment: and, as kneeling down, she raised her bright blue eyes, the lady thought she had never seen so lovely a creature.

"What is your pleasure with me, maiden?" asked the baroness, in a condescending tone.

"Lady," replied Margaret modestly; "I am the wife of one of my lord's vassals; and my mother and myself humbly beg you will accept this present."

"And is this your present?—What is your name?"

"Margaret Holgrave, lady."

"Look, Lady Anne," said Isabella, displaying a pair of white silk gloves, beautifully wrought with gold. "Do you not think this a fair present for a vassal to bestow?"

"The gloves are very beautiful," replied the lady.

• "Your gift betokens a good feeling, young dame," said Isabella, turning to Margaret. "But why did you choose so costly a present?"

"Indeed, noble lady," replied Margaret, "the gloves cost but little—Edith, here, my husband's mother, knitted them, and I have striven to ornament them."

"What! Is this your embroidery?"

"Yes, my lady."

"This is not the work of a novice, Lady Anne — You are accustomed to needlework!"

"Yes, my lady — before I was married I obtained my support by making the vestments for some of the monks at Hailes Abbey."

"Indeed! very well — and you are this young person's mother-in-law?" said the baroness, for the first time addressing Edith.

"Yes, Baroness de Boteler," replied the old woman.

"Very well," said the lady, and looking alternately at Edith and Margaret, she added, "I accept your gift — you may now retire."

They accordingly withdrew from the chamber, and, in the court-yard, were joined by Holgrave. "Did the baroness take the gloves?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Margaret, in delight, "and she seemed pleased with the embroidery. O, Stephen, she is so beautiful! She looks like an angel! Does she not, mother?"

"She has beauty, Margaret," answered Edith, "but it is not the beauty of an angel — it has too much of pride."

"But all ladies are proud, mother! I warrant she is not prouder than another."

"Maybe not, Margaret; but yet that lady who sat at her side looked not so high as the baroness. There was more sweetness in her smile, and gentleness in her voice."

"O yes, she spoke very sweetly, but she is not so handsome as the baron's lady."

"Margaret," replied Edith; "when you are as old as I, you will not look upon beauty as you do now; — a gentle heart and a pallid cheek will seem lovelier then, than brightness and bloom, if there be pride on the brow. But, Stephen, what said the steward when you gave him the gold?"

"Oh, he said mine was the best gift that had been brought yet. But come, mother, it is time we were at home."

The Lady de Boteler, Lady Anne Hammond, and the other ladies, were admiring the embroidered gloves, when De Boteler and Sir Robert Knowles entered the apartment.

"See, Roland," said the baroness, holding the gloves towards her husband; "see, what a pretty gift I have received since you left us!"

"They are indeed pretty," answered De Boteler; "and the fair hands that wrought them deserve praise. What think you, Sir Robert?"

"O, you must not ask Sir Robert for any fine compliment," interrupted the baroness. "They are not a lady's gift — they were presented to me by the wife of one of your vassals."

"The wife of a vassal would not have taste enough to buy such as these; and there is but one about Winchcombe who could work so well. And, by my faith, I now remember that it was part of the tenure by which I some time since granted land, to present a pair of gloves. — Was it not a fair-looking damsel, one Stephen Holgrave's wife, that brought them?"

"I think she said her name was Holgrave," replied the lady in a cold tone. "But indeed, my lord baron, you seem to be wondrously well acquainted with the faces and the handywork of your vassal's wives!"

"Nay, Isabella," said the pale interesting lady of Sir Robert Knowles; "it is not strange that my Lord de Boteler should know the faces of those who were born on his land; and this young woman's skill could not fail to have procured her notice. But the handiness of her fingers has not made her vain. You know I am fond of reading faces, and I would answer that she is as modest and good as she is fair."

"O, I dare say she is," replied the baroness, and immediately changed the conversation.

The next morning Holgrave received a peremptory order to attend at the castle in the afternoon; and the henchman of the baron, who was the bearer of the message, refused to give any information why he had been so summoned. Edith, with her natural penetration, saw, by the hesitation of the servitor, and by the tone in which the mandate was conveyed, that something of more than ordinary moment was about to be transacted, and, with an undefined feeling of alarm, she resolved to accompany her son.

As they entered the court-yard, the henchman, who had delivered the message, accosted Holgrave, telling him he must go into the hall to answer to some matter before the baron.

"What is the matter which my son is to answer, friend?" asked Edith; but the man evaded the question, and Holgrave, leaving his mother in the outer court-yard, passed through one of the arched doors into the other, and, with a firm step, though with some apprehension of evil, entered the hall.

He had scarcely time to give a nod of recognition to several neighbours who stood near the entrance, when the steward approached, and, desiring him to walk farther up the hall, placed him at the first step that elevated the upper end, thus cutting off every possibility of communicating with his neighbours. Holgrave felt anything but composure in his present conspicuous situation: though strong in the rectitude of his conscience, yet he felt apprehensions and misgivings; and the strange silence that was observed respecting the intended charge alarmed him the more. As the hall was always open on such occasions, he speedily saw a crowd of vassals pouring in — some anxious to know the event, either through a feeling of friendship or hatred, and others merely from curiosity. The eyes of each man, as he entered, fell, as if instinctively, upon the yeoman; and he could perceive, as they formed into groups, that he was the subject of their conversation. Presently his mother, supported by an old friend named Hartwell, entered, and he thought she regarded him with an earnest and sorrowful look. But his attention was immediately diverted; — the upper door opened, and De Boteler and the baroness, with Sir Robert and Lady Knowles, entered the hall.

There was near the steps a small table with writing materials, at which the steward ought to have been seated, to write down the proceedings; but old Luke was not so quick of hearing, or perhaps of comprehension, as Calverley, and the esquire, therefore, took his place.

"Stephen Holgrave," said the baron, in a stern voice, "are these your shafts?" as he beckoned to old Luke to hand the yeoman two arrows which he had hitherto concealed.

Holgrave looked at them an instant —

"Yes, my lord," said he, without hesitation, but yet with a consciousness that the answer was to injure him.

"What, they are yours then?" said De Boteler, in a still harsher tone.

Holgrave bowed his head.

"Come forward, keeper," continued the baron, "and state how these arrows came into your hands!"

The keeper made the deposition which the reader will have anticipated; and his men were then examined, who corroborated the statement of their master.

"Now, Stephen Holgrave," asked the baron, "what have you to say to this?"

"My lord," replied Holgrave, still undaunted, "the shafts are mine; but I am as innocent of the deed as the babe at its mother's breast. Whoever shot the buck must have stolen my arrows, in order to bring me into this scrape."

"By my faith, Holgrave, you seem to think lightly of this matter. Do you call it a scrape to commit a felony in your lord's chase? Have you any thing further to urge in your defence?"

There was a momentary pause after the baron had ceased. Holgrave hesitated to reply; — he had denied the charge, and he knew not what else to say. But when every eye except Calverley's, from Roland de Boteler's to that of the lowest freeman present, was fixed on the accused, expecting his answer, a slight movement was observed among the people, and Edith Holgrave, supported by Hartwell, pressed forward, and stood on the step by the side of her son. The gaze was now in an instant turned from the son to the mother, and Edith, after pausing a moment to collect her faculties, said, in a loud voice —

"My Lord de Boteler, and you, noble sir, and fair dames — it may seem strange that an old woman like me should speak for a man of my son's years; but, in truth, he is better able to defend himself with his arm than his tongue."

"Woman!" interrupted De Boteler impatiently, "your son has answered for himself — retire."

"Nay, my lord," replied Edith, with a bright eye and a flushing cheek, and drawing herself up to a height that she had not exhibited for many years — "nay, my lord, my son is able to defend himself against the weapon of an open foe, but not against the doings of a covert enemy!"

"What mean you, woman?" quickly returned De Boteler; "do you accuse the keeper of my chase as having plotted against your son, or whom do you suspect?"

"Baron de Boteler," replied Edith, with a look and a tone that seemed to gain fresh energy from the kind of menace with which the interrogatories were put, "I do not accuse your keeper. He had an honest father, and he has himself ever been a man of good repute. But I do say," she added in a wild and high tone, and elevating her right hand and riveting her flashing eyes on Calverley — "I do say, the charge as regards my son is a base and traitorous plot."

"Hold your tongue, woman," interrupted De Boteler, who had listened to her with evident reluctance. "Why do you look so fiercely on my squire. Have you aught against him?"

"My lord baron," replied Edith, "I have nothing to say that can bring home guilt to the guilty, or do right to the wronged: but I will say, my lord, that what a man is to-day he will be to-morrow, unless he has some end to answer by changing. The esquire will scarcely give the word of courtesy to the most reputable vassal, and yet did he talk secretly and familiarly with John Byles — and here is one who will swear that he heard him repeat the name of my son, and then something about an arrow."

Old Hartwell now stepped forward, and averred that he had seen Calverley and Byles talking together in the chase, and that he had overheard the name of Stephen Holgrave repeated in conjunction with an allusion to arrows. The circumstance, however, had been quite forgotten until the charge this morning brought it to his memory. This eaves-dropping testimony amounted to nothing, even before Calverley denied every particular of the fact, which he did with the utmost composure —

"What motive have I to plot against Holgrave?" asked Calverley.

"You *have* a motive," said Edith, "both in envy and in love. You well know that if this charge could be proved, Stephen Holgrave must die."

Calverley was about to speak, when he was interrupted by De Boteler, who expressed himself dissatisfied with the explanations on both sides:

"The proof is doubtful," said he, suddenly. "Give the fellow back his arrows, and dissolve the court. — Away!"

When the arrows were handed to their owner, he instantly snapped them asunder.

"What means this, Stephen Holgrave?" asked the baron impatiently.

"My lord, these arrows were used in a foul purpose; and Stephen Holgrave will never disgrace his hand by using them again. The time may come, my lord, when the malicious coward who stole them shall rue this day!"

"Bravely said and done, my stout yeoman!" said Sir Robert Knowles, who broke silence for the first time during the investigation: "and my Lord de Boteler," he continued, addressing the baron, "the arm that acquitted itself so well in your defence, you may be assured, could never have disgraced itself by midnight plunder."

"The blessing of the most high God be with you for that, noble sir," said Edith, as she knelt down and fervently thanked Sir Robert; and then, leaning on the arm of her son, she left the hall.

"By my faith, Sir Robert," said De Boteler, "Stephen Holgrave wants no counsel while that old dame so ably takes his part. But a truce with this mummery. Come along—our time is more precious than wasting it in hearing such varlets."

The baron and his guests then withdrew.

At the distance of nearly a mile from Sudley Castle, and at about a quarter of a mile from the high road that led to Oxford, was a singular kind of quarry or cliff. Its elevation was considerable, and the portion of the hill visible from the road was covered with the heathy verdure which usually springs from such scanty soil; but on passing round to the other side, all the barren unsightly appearance of a half-worked quarry presented itself. Huge masses of stone stood firmly as nature had formed them, while others, of a magnitude sufficient to awaken in the hardiest a sense of danger, hung apparently by so slight a tenure, that a passing gust of wind seemed only required to release their fragile hold. But the hill had stood thus unaltered during the remembrance of the oldest inhabitant of Winchcombe. Strange stories were whispered respecting this cliff, but as the honour of the house of Sudley, and that of another family equally noble, were concerned in the tale, little more than obscure hints were suffered to escape.

One evening, as the rumour went, a female figure, enveloped in a mantle of some dark colour, and holding an infant in her arms, was observed, seated on one of the stones of the quarry, with her feet resting on a fragment beneath. Her face was turned towards Sudley, and as the atmosphere was clear, and her position elevated, the castle could well be distinguished. Wild shrieks were heard by some during that night, and the morning sun revealed blood on fragments of the stone, and on the earth beneath; and at a little distance it was perceived that the grass had been recently dug up, and trodden down with a heavy foot. The peasants crossed themselves at the sight, but no inquiries were made, and from that day the cliff was sacred to superstition, for no inhabitant of the district would have touched a stone of the quarry, or have dared to pass it after nightfall for the world.

It was beneath the shadow of those impending stones, and over the spot where it was whispered that the murdered had been buried, that Calverley, on the night of the day that Holgrave left scatheless the hall of Sudley Castle, was pacing to and fro, awaiting the appearance of Byles. "He lingers," said Calverley, as the rising moon told him it was getting late, "I suppose the fool fears to come near this place." But after some minutes of feverish impatience, Byles at length came.

"What detained you, sirrah?" asked the other sharply.

The yeoman muttered an excuse; but his speech betrayed him.

"You have been drinking," said Calverley, with anger. "Could you not have kept sober till you had seen me?"

"Why, Master Calverley, to tell you the truth, that old mother Holgrave frightened me so that —"

"Your childish cowardice had like to have betrayed us. Byles, you have not dealt honestly by me in this affair — but you are not in a state to be spoken to now."

"There you are mistaken, squire. I am just as sober as I ought to be to come to this place: but I can't see why we could n't have talked as well any where else as here!"

"Yes, and have some old gossiping fool break in. No, no — here we are safe. But come nearer, and stand, as I do, in the shadow of the cliff."

"Not a foot nearer, Master Calverley, for all the gold in England. Why, you are standing just where the poor lady and her babe were buried!"

"Suppose I am — think you they will sleep the worse because I stand on their grave? Oh! it is a fine thing," he continued, as if following up some reflection in his mind, "to bury those we hate — deep, deep — so that they may never blast our sight again! — Byles, you perjured yourself in that affair of the buck. You swore to aid me. You had gold for the service, and yet it would have been better that the beast were still alive, than to have left it behind in the chase; it has only brought suspicion on me, and given Holgrave a fresh triumph!"

"No fault of mine, squire," answered Byles, in a sullen tone; "there was no such thing as getting the creature out; and if Sam or I had been caught, it would have been worse still. But bad as Stephen is, he would n't have thought of accusing us, if it had n't have been for that old she-fox, his mother."

"Aye," said Calverley, with a smile — if the curve of a bloodless lip could be so designated — "aye, you name her rightly, Byles: she is a fox, and like a fox shall she die, — hunted — driven — tortured. Byles, have you never heard it said that this woman was a witch?"

"Why — yes — I have, Master Calverley; but in truth I do n't like to have anything to do with her. If she set a spell upon me, I could never do good again. Did not she tell Roger Follett, that if he did n't take care, sooner or later, the gable end of his house would fall? and so, sure enough it did."

"And yet, knowing this woman a witch, you would not assist in ridding the parish of such a pest?"

Byles made no reply.

"Well," resumed Calverley, taking some nobles from a small bag he had in his hand, "these must be for him who will aid me. You have been well paid, John Byles, for the work you did not do, and now, — see if your industry and your profitable farm will befriend you as much as I should have done."

This speech acted as Calverley had anticipated. The yeomen's scruples fled; and alarmed at the prospect of losing those comforts he had enjoyed since entering into the nefarious league, he said more earnestly than he had yet spoken —

"Master Calverley, you will find no man act more faithfully by you than John Byles. You have been a good friend to me, and I would do any thing to serve you, but — you see a man can't stifle conscience all at once."

"Conscience!" repeated Calverley, with a smile of irony. "Do you know, Byles, I think that conscience of yours will neither serve you in this world, nor in the next! You have too little to make you an honest man,

and too much to make you a reckless knave. But a truce with conscience. I have here," said he, holding up the bag of coin, "that which would buy the conscience of twenty such as you; and now, Byles, if you choose to earn this gold, which will be given to another if you hesitate, swear on these gospels," presenting to the yeoman a Testament, "that you will be a faithful and willing confederate in my future plans respecting the Holgraves. Will you swear?"

"Yes," replied Byles; but as he spoke, he looked wistfully round, in evident trepidation.

"Are you afraid of good or bad spirits? Nonsense! — do as you have promised, and take the gold."

Byles made the required asseveration, and took the price.

"What are you gazing at, Byles?" asked Calverley.

"See, see!" said Byles, pointing to the northwest.

Calverley stepped from the shadow of the cliff, and beheld a meteor in the sky, brightening and expanding, as the clouds opened, until it assumed the appearance of a brilliant star, of astonishing magnitude, encircled by dazzling rays, which, in a singular manner, were all inclined in one direction, and pointing to that part of the horizon where lay the rival of England — France.

Even in Calverley's breast, the bad passions were for a moment hushed, as he gazed upon the radiant phenomenon; but upon the more gross and more timorous mind of Byles, the effect produced was much more striking. He seemed to imagine, that from that brilliant star some celestial being was about to descend, and blast him with the wrath of heaven: and when a lambent flame, darting across the firmament, played for an instant around the quarry, he concluded that heaven's vengeance had, indeed, overtaken him. Rushing from the haunted spot, he stopped not in his headlong course, until he stood in the midst of a group of half-dressed neighbours near his own door, who had been aroused from their slumbers to gaze upon the comet.

Calverley, although possessed of more moral courage than Byles, and viewing the meteor with altogether different feelings, was yet not so entirely imbued with the philosophy of later times, as to behold it without apprehensions. When Byles had fled, he turned, and walked on towards the castle with a more rapid pace than usual.

Nothing of moment occurred at Sudley Castle for many months, if we except the birth of an heir; the appointment of Mary Byles, through Calverley's influence, to be the nurse; and the accession of Calverley himself to the coveted stewardship. The baroness's infant grew a fine, healthy child; but, as is sometimes the case with stout children, it had occasionally convulsive fits in teething. This, however, was carefully concealed from the mother, and Mary continued to receive great praise for her nursing. But it unfortunately happened, that one morning, when the boy had been laughing and playing in the highest spirits, Mary saw its countenance suddenly change. This was the more unfortunate, as De Boteler and his lady were momentarily expected to return, after a fortnight's absence, and Mary had dressed the infant in its gayest apparel to meet its parents, and had been congratulating herself upon the sprightliness and health of the boy. No excuses of sleep would satisfy the mother now: if the child was not taken to her, the nurse was assured she would come to look at him, and kiss him as he slept.

At this moment of perplexity, some medicine, that she had obtained from Edith, occurred to her, and, with a feeling of confidence, and almost of ecstasy, she took a phial from a shelf in a cupboard where she had placed it, and, pouring out the contents in a large spoon, hesitated an instant ere she administered it. "Let me see," said she; "surely it was a large spoon-

ful Edith told me to give — yet all that was in the phial does n't fill the spoon. Surely I can't be wrong: no — I remember she said a large spoonful, and we did n't talk of anything else — so I must be right." But Mary still hesitated, till, hearing a sudden noise in the court-yard, which, she conjectured, was her mistress returned, and as the child was getting worse every moment, she leaned back its head, and, forcing open its mouth, compelled the patient, though with difficulty, to swallow its death. The draught was taken; the rigid muscles relaxed, and for a minute the child lay motionless in her lap; but in an instant after, Mary could scarcely suppress a shriek at the horrid sight that met her gaze. The eyes opened, and glared, and seemed as if starting from the head — the fair face and the red lips were blue, deepening and deepening, till settling in blackness — the limbs contracted — the mouth opened, and displayed a tongue discoloured and swollen — then came a writhing and heaving of the body, and a low, agonized moan: and, as Mary looked almost frantic at this dreadful sight, Edith's words, when she had given her the phial, "that there was enough there to kill," suddenly occurred to her — and then, too, came, with a dreadful distinctness, the remembrance of the true directions which Edith had given.

"Oh, I have murdered the child!" exclaimed Mary, in the dreadful excitement of the moment. "What will become of me? what shall I do? I shall surely be hung. Oh! oh!" she continued, covering her face with her hands, to shut out the sight of the gasping infant. At this instant, the door opened; Mary looked up fearfully — it was her husband. "Oh, Byles! Byles! look at this child! What will become of me?"

"The saints preserve us!" ejaculated Byles, as he looked at the babe: "Mary, how is this?"

"Oh! don't ask me; but go for Master Calverley. For God's sake, do not stand as if you were bewitched: see! see! he is dying. The poor child! What will become of me? Run, Byles, run, for mercy's sake, and tell Master Calverley."

Byles stood looking, with a countenance expressive of stupified horror, and yet, as if doubting that the livid, distorted, suffering creature could be the fine blooming boy he had so lately seen. At length, aroused by the increasing energy of Mary, he turned silently round and left the room; as he closed the door, the agonized spirit of the little Roland passed away.

In an instant Byles returned with Calverley, and even he started and uttered an exclamation, as his eyes fell on the ghastly face of the dead child.

"Mary Byles, how did this happen?" asked Calverley, eagerly.

"Master Calverley, I will tell you truly," answered Mary, in a voice scarcely audible from its tremor. "You have been our best friend, and you would not see me hung? It was all a mistake — I am sure I would n't hurt a hair of the dear creature's head." And here the feelings of woman so far prevailed, that she shed some disinterested tears.

"You could have no motive to destroy the child — but tell me quickly what you have to say." Calverley spoke with a harshness that instantly recalled all Mary's fears and selfishness.

"Edith Holgrave," said she, "gave me some medicine to —"

"Edith Holgrave!" interrupted Calverley, with a quickness of voice and eagerness of look that told how greatly the name interested him.

"Yes, Edith Holgrave told me to give ten drops out of that little bottle, (pointing to the empty phial,) and I — gave — but, oh! Master Calverley, I forgot —"

"You gave it all?" said Calverley, impatiently.

"Yes."

"And you will swear it was a draught that Edith Holgrave gave you

that has killed the child?" said Calverley, with a brightening countenance.

"Oh, yes," replied Mary; "but indeed —"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Calverley. "Hear me, or you will be hanged! If you hope to save your life, Mary Byles, you must swear that you gave it according to Edith's directions — breathe not a syllable of the drops!"

Mary looked with a fearful wildness at Calverley, as she comprehended his meaning; but Byles said quickly,

"What! do you mean her to hang old Edith?"

"Certainly," returned Calverley, coolly, "unless you prefer a gallows for your wife. But I dare say you would rather see Mary hanged than that old witch! I will leave you to manage the matter between yourselves."

"Oh, do n't leave us! — do n't leave us!" said Byles, in an agony. "Oh, save me! save me!" sobbed Mary.

"Was any one present when you gave it?" inquired Calverley, as he turned round and addressed Mary.

"Yes; Winifred handed me the bottle, but the child began to cry, so I sent her out."

"It was well she was here," returned he: "and now, remember — not a word of the drops! swear, simply, that the draught destroyed the infant." And, without awaiting her reply, he seized the pale and trembling Byles by the arm, and dragged him from the room into the passage. He then unlocked a door that had never been observed by either Byles or his wife, and, closing it after them, led the yeoman down a flight of dark steps, and, pausing a moment at the bottom to listen, he unlocked another door, and Byles found himself in a dark passage that branched from one of the entrances of the court-yard to some of the culinary offices. "Go you that way, and I will go this," said Calverley, "and, remember, you know nothing of the child's death." As he spoke, he darted from Byles, and gained the court-yard without farther observation. He walked carelessly about, till a female domestic passing, he called to her, desiring her to go and ask Mary Byles if the young Lord Roland was ready to meet his parents, as they were momentarily expected. The woman departed, and he walked over to the gate between the front towers, as if looking for the return of his lord.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT ails you, Stephen," asked Margaret, alarmed at the strange paleness of the yeoman's countenance, and the agitation of his manner, as he entered the cottage on the afternoon the child died. But Holgrave, without replying to her interrogatory, hastily closed and bolted the door. He then drew the large oak table from the side of the wall, and placed it as a barricade before it. "Stephen, what means this bolting and barring?" inquired Edith, as she saw with surprise his defensive preparations. "What fear you, my son?"

"Fear! mother?" replied Holgrave, taking a lance and battle-axe from their place over the chimney, and firmly grasping the former as he stood against the table; "I do not fear now, mother, nor need you — for, by the blessed St. Paul, they shall pass over my mangled body before they reach you!"

"Stephen Holgrave, are you mad?" returned Edith, alarmed: "tell me the meaning of this! — Speak, I command thee!"

"Oh, mother, I cannot tell you," answered Holgrave, turning away his face from her searching glance; "oh, no, I cannot tell you!"

"Stephen, you were not used to answer me thus. I charge you, by the authority and love of thy mother, and in the name of the blessed saints, to tell me what has happened."

"Alas! my mother, you will know it soon enough. It is said you have — have — bewitched — or poisoned — the baron's son!"

"Oh, mother!" shrieked Margaret. "Fly! — to the abbey, and take sanctuary!"

"Margaret!" replied Edith, "I stir not hence. The guilty may take refuge from the anger of the laws; but it is not for the innocent to fear and fly like the felon!"

Margaret then threw herself at the feet of Edith, and besought her, in the most earnest and pathetic manner, to take refuge at Hailes Abbey, in which she was seconded by Holgrave. The old woman remained silent; but there was a brightness — a glistening in her eyes as if a tear had started; — but if a tear did start, it did not fall. At length, recovering her composure, she rose firmly from her seat —

"My son," said she, "lay down your arms, I command. Should my life be offered up to the vengeful spirit of Thomas Calverley, who alone can be the foul author of this charge, it will be only taking from me a few short years — perhaps days — of suffering. But thou hast years of health and life before thee, and thou hast this gentle weeping creature to sustain."

"What!" interrupted Margaret warmly; "Oh, no — the mother of Stephen Holgrave to be torn from us without a blow! Did he not fight for his lord? and shall he not risk his life for his mother?"

"And is this thy counsel, foolish woman?" replied Edith, in a tone of rebuke.

"She speaks my purpose," said Holgrave, as he grasped still firmer the poised weapon.

Edith stepped quickly up to her son and knelt before him —

"Oh Stephen, my son, my first-born — thy mother kneels to thee. Lay aside that lance, and hearken to the words of her who bore thee and nourished thee. Oh, bring not sorrow and ruin on thyself and her! What would be the bitterness of my dying moments if my son lived not to lay me beside his father? — if thy Margaret was left to mourn in lowly widowhood — and, perhaps, to fall beneath the base arts of Calverley! Oh, my son, my son, by the soul of thy dead father, and by the blessing of thy mother, resist not! — Hark! they come — they come! Haste, Stephen — Give me the weapon."

Holgrave, shocked and agitated, could only think of raising his mother from her knees. He suffered her, without resistance, to take the lance from his hand, and then attempt, with her weak fingers, to remove the barricade, while advancing footsteps were heard without.

The hostile party reached the cottage, and the latch was quickly raised; but, finding it resist their attempts, the voice of Calverley, in an authoritative tone, pronounced —

"In the name of the Lord Roland de Boteler, I demand the body of Edith Holgrave, who is accused of the foul crimes of witchcraft and murder. — Open the door, Stephen Holgrave, if you are within!"

"Fiend of hell! it is he!" muttered Holgrave, gnashing his teeth, but without moving.

The party without seemed to have expected resistance; for the next moment a blow was struck upon the door which made the whole house shake; and the besieged perceived that they were forcing an entrance with the trunk of a young tree, or some such machine, in imitation of the ram, not yet disused in warfare. Speedily the timber yielded and cracked; and

Holgrave, starting from the stupor in which he was plunged, caught up the axe, and posted himself in an attitude of striking near the door.

"Pollute not thy hand with the blood of the base," said Edith, grasping her son's arm — "Judgment is mine, saith the Lord!"

"Thomas Calverley," continued she, in a loud calm voice, "produce your warrant!"

"The word of the Lord de Boteler," replied Calverley, "is warrant enough for the capture of the murderess of his child. Surrender, Stephen Holgrave, I command!"

At this moment a noise was heard, as if an entrance had been effected through the roof; and ere Holgrave could release his arm from his mother's hold, a shriek from Margaret struck upon his ear. He turned his head and beheld her covering him with outstretched arms from the drawn bows of two retainers, who appeared at the door of the room, or loft, above.

"Archers, do your duty!" shouted Calverley; but at the moment some voices without exclaimed suddenly, "My lord comes! My lord comes!" and the bowmen drew back, and Holgrave instinctively dropped his axe.

De Boteler, either through anxiety for Edith's arrest, or from an apprehension that Holgrave might oppose it, did indeed approach, and as he advanced, with hasty and agitated steps, and beheld the evidence of resistance in the rent roof and shattered door, his rage was extreme.

"Tear down the cottage!" cried he, his voice choked with passion, "and take this foul sorceress dead or alive!" The command was about to be fulfilled when the door was unbarred and opened by Holgrave.

"Stop;" said the baron, "the knave surrenders. Base-born churl, how dare you oppose my commands?"

"My lord," said the intrepid yeoman, "I had a right to defend my dwelling against unlawful assault."

"Unlawful! Do you call the orders of your lord unlawful?"

"My Lord de Boteler," said Edith, stepping forward, and looking full at the baron, "it is unlawful to send armed men, in the open day, without warrant, save your own will, to attack the house of a faithful vassal and set his life in jeopardy. Had you sent a messenger in peace, Edith Holgrave would have obeyed the mandate. There was little need of all this tumult to take an aged woman, whom *He* knoweth is innocent, and whom you, Lord of Sudley, in your own breast —"

"Foul-mouthed witch!" interrupted De Boteler, "keep thy tongue silent — no more — lest I anticipate justice by hanging you at your own threshold!"

"That you dare not do!" said Edith, calmly.

"Bear her away, Calverley — bear her away, or I cannot answer for the result. Place her in the dungeon at the top of the tower, and let no one see her till to-morrow, when she shall be conveyed to Gloucester Castle."

That same day, Calverley summoned, or rather packed, a jury, at which he himself presided; and a verdict of wilful murder was returned against Edith. Apprehensive, however, that the charge of poisoning might not be sustained upon the unsupported testimony of Mary Byles, he easily influenced the credulous jurors to believe that witchcraft had as much to do with the child's death as poison. His usual tact, however, had forsaken him on this occasion, and it was not until the verdict was announced and recorded, that the unwelcome conviction flashed across his mind, that the temporal courts could exercise no jurisdiction over the crime of witchcraft. It was now too late to alter the language of the inquisition. It had gone forth to hundreds who awaited its promulgation with intense anxiety; and the language of the verdict, that "Edith Holgrave delivered to Mary Byles a certain charmed or poisonous drug, for the purpose of destroying Roland de Boteler, and which said drug was administered to, and caused the death

of the said Roland," was, in a few hours, familiar to the whole town and neighbourhood.

Calverley was too well aware of the jealous vigilance the church exercised in cases appertaining to its jurisdiction, not to feel apprehensive that its influence might be exerted to defeat the operation of the temporal court; for, although the ecclesiastical courts could not award the last penalty to persons convicted of witchcraft or heresy, yet they were as tenacious of their exclusive right to investigate such cases, as if they possessed the power to punish. When a person accused of those crimes was adjudged to die, a writ was issued from the court of King's Bench, called a writ *de heretico comburendo*, by virtue of which the victim was handed over to the temporal authority, and underwent the punishment awarded. But it was seldom, at this period, that the obstinacy of a delinquent brought about such a consummation, for a confession of the crime (if the first) only subjected him to ecclesiastical penance or censure. It was not till the reign of James the First that we find any legislative enactment against witchcraft. The well-known passage in Exodus which conveys the divine command to the great lawgiver, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," was the supposed authority from which the church derived its jurisdiction; and though the priests of the old law were armed with, and probably exercised, the ordinance in its fullest meaning, yet the disciples of a purer and milder doctrine delegated that authority to a power more suited to carry its decrees into effect.

The news of these transactions had no sooner reached the ears of Father John, than he hastened to the abbot of Winchcombe, for the purpose of beseeching him to demand the prisoner in the name of the church.

Simon Sudbury, the mitred abbot, was a man of a fair and florid complexion, with large, expressive eyes, that even at the age of fifty were of a deep and clear blue. He was tall, and just sufficiently corpulent to give an air of dignity to his figure; but even had his person been insignificant, there sat on his brow, and glanced in his eye, that pride and conscious superiority which, even from an equal, would have extorted respect.

The monk made a lowly obeisance as he approached the abbot, and when desired to make known his business, he detailed in a brief but perspicuous manner the charge against Edith. The superior listened with calm attention; but it was evident that the Baron de Boteler was not one with whom he would feel disposed to interfere.

"My son," said he, when Father John had ceased, "it seems an oppressive case according to your statement; but you are well aware how much our holy church has been shorn of her power, and how eager the monarch, and nobles, and even the people, are to abridge our privileges." The abbot paused, and again resumed: "I fear, my son, our remonstrance would be disregarded by this young lord, and only cause a farther indignity to be cast on our holy church."

"My lord," answered the monk, "I would not urge you; but I so well know the woman's piety and innocence, that it would be to participate in the guilt of her accusers not to implore your lordship's interposition." The abbot took up a pen that lay before him, and was about to write; but he laid it down again, saying—

"Would it not be better to await her trial, and should she be found guilty, petition the king for a pardon?"

"My lord, she may not survive the imprisonment."

"Well, my son, her earthly troubles would then cease without our interference—the innocent are better away from this sinful world, where oppression rules with a strong hand."

"True," answered the monk, with increased tenacity; "but will the Lord of life hold us guiltless, if we heed not the cry of the innocent?"

The abbot looked frowningly on Father John, as he again took up the pen. "My son, you are not serving the church by such pertinacity. This application will only expose one of its dignitaries to humiliation; however, I shall write to the baron, since you desire it, and demand that the accused be transferred to the tribunal over which we preside."

The abbot waved his hand impatiently, and the monk withdrew.

The hall of Sudley had been hastily hung with black cloth, and the walls of the adjoining apartment exhibited a similar covering; and here, surrounded by a number of lighted tapers, lay the corpse of the little Roland. At the foot of the bier knelt a monk in silent prayer, at the side sat the Lady Isabella, absorbed in a grief which none but a mother can feel, and regardless of her husband's entreaties to withdraw."

"Oh no, not yet," she said, "I cannot yet leave my babe. It was but yesterday my heart bounded at the thought of caressing my lovely boy; and to-day—but this witch—this murderess!" she continued, turning round, and elevating her voice; "what of her? Does she confess her guilt?"

"No," replied Boteler; "and she persists that the potion, if rightly administered, would rather have benefited than harmed our Roland."

"Heed her not—she is as artful as vile—they are an evil brood altogether. Know you, De Boteler," she added quickly, "whether the young woman participated in the deed of darkness?"

"Nothing has appeared against her," replied the baron.

At this instant an attendant entered, and delivered a letter to her lord, from the abbot of Winchcombe, adding that two messengers were waiting in the hall.

The baron untied the silken cord that confined the parchment, and having hastily perused it, handed it to the Lady Isabella.

"De Boteler," said the lady, rising from her seat when her eyes had run over the writing, "this woman shall not escape justice. Go, my lord—remember your murdered child, and compromise not with those who would screen the guilty from punishment?"

De Boteler moved from the illuminated bier, and entered the hall with a haughty step; and as his eye fell on Father John, the frown on his brow increased. He did not, however, appear to heed him, but, turning to the abbot's messenger, said,

"Monk!—I have read my lord abbot's letter, and it would seem that he ought to have known better than interfere in such a matter. My child has been poisoned—the evidence is clear and convincing—why, therefore, does he make such a demand?"

"My lord baron," replied the messenger, "the verdict states that a charmed potion has been administered to the young lord. This accusation precedes the charge of poisoning: therefore, the spiritual court must first decide on the fact of witchcraft, before the temporal tribunal can take cognizance of the other offence."

"And does your abbot think, when the hope of my house has perished, whether by false incantations or deadly poison, that—Depart, monk!" continued he, in a choked voice, "and tell your abbot that this woman's guilt or innocence shall be tried by the laws of the realm."

"Then, my lord, you will not comply with the mandate of my superior?"

"Mandate!" repeated the enraged baron—"ha! ha! Mandate, forsooth! From whom—from an impotent priest of a waning church—and which church, with the blessing of God and our good king, will soon cease to arrogate to itself the encroachment which it has made upon the royal prerogative."

"Note down this speech, Father John," said the messenger. "And now, Baron of Sudley, I formally demand, in the name of Simon Sudbury,

the mitred abbot of Winchcombe, the body of Edith Holgrave, whom you impiously and rebelliously detain against the privileges of holy church: and —”

“Hold, minion! Cease! or you will tempt me to hang the culprit from the battlements of yonder keep, if it were only to afford news to your master. Presumptuous shaveling! know you not that the royal franchise granted to this manor empowers me to sit in judgment on my vassals, and that it is only as an act of grace that she is handed over to a jury of the county.”

“The ‘act of grace,’ my lord,” said Father John, looking sternly at De Boteler, “only shows that your mind is not so fully convinced of this woman’s guilt as to imbolden you to take the charge of her death entirely upon your own conscience —”

“Base-born knave! do you think you wear a coat of mail in that hypocritical garb. Ho! Calverley, let the woman be instantly transmitted to Gloucester castle, that my lord abbot may thunder his anathemas against its walls, if it so please him; and then bear this meddling monk to the tumbrel, that he may learn better than to beard his natural lord under his own roof.”

“Not so, my lord,” said Isabella, at this moment entering the hall, attracted by the loud tones of De Boteler’s voice; “not so, my lord; the tumbrel is not for such as he, however rude his bearing. My Lord de Boteler,” turning to the monk, “has doubtless given you an answer — retire, and do not farther provoke his wrath.”

“Lady,” returned Father John, with dignity, “I retire at your bidding, but not through fear of the Baron de Boteler. Let him, if he will, insult and expose an anointed priest — but wo to him if he does! The blight has already fallen on the blossom — beware of the tree!”

The baroness looked rebuked; and before De Boteler could reply, the two monks left the hall.

“Did I not anticipate this result?” said the abbot, looking sternly at the mortified monk, as the messenger detailed the interview with the baron.

Father John bowed.

“Your importunity,” continued the abbot, has cast this indignity on holy church, and on me its minister; but nevertheless, this lord, powerful though he be, must be taught obedience to that power he has contemned.”

“My lord,” replied the monk, encouraged by the abbot’s energy, “our holy church, thank heaven, is not without *one* able and zealous advocate. A timorous attitude at this moment would only give fresh vigour to those who seek to abridge its power.”

“Aye, my son, there has been timidity enough in those prelates, who tamely acquiesced in the late enactment against the clergy; and, alas! how often since have the servants of God been dragged from the altar and imprisoned like felons, merely to gratify the haughty barons in their desire to humble our holy religion! The king, too, is a masked enemy, and countenances the impious attempts to abridge our rights.”

“And yet, my lord,” returned John, “the church is the natural bulwark of royalty: by humbling it, he paralyzes a power the most zealous, and the best calculated to maintain the divine right of kings.”

“It is, indeed, the stay and hope of monarchy,” replied Sudbury; “but kings are men, and fallible. This woman’s case will, nevertheless, demonstrate whether farther encroachments will be submitted to by the prelates without a struggle. I shall write letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Abbot of Westminster, and you, my son, shall bear them to London. Retire for the present, and prepare for your journey.”

The abbot was as good as his word, and presently the fate of the obscure Edith Holgrave became a question which kindled the fires of party zeal in

half the noble breasts in the kingdom. It is not to the purpose of our story to describe the intrigues which, at this period, tore asunder the court of Edward. Suffice it to say, that after many stormy discussions in the cabinet, at which the abbot's first messenger, father John, and De Boteler himself, were interrogated — the church triumphed; the Baron of Sudley was condemned to offer an expiatory gift, and a writ was issued to prohibit the court of assize from trying the prisoner.

On the day the prohibitory writ left London, a small iron box, with a superscription, addressed to Thomas Calverley, was left by a stranger at Sudley Castle, and immediately after, by another messenger, a packet, in which, within many envelopes, a key was concealed. Calverley, naturally concluding that this key belonged to the box he had just received, with a variety of perplexing conjectures, unlocked it, and beheld the crimson damask dress of a pursuivant, on which the royal arms were embroidered in gold, and beneath the dress a purse of gold coin and a scroll of parchment, on which the following was written, evidently in a disguised hand: —

"A chancery messenger will leave London on the morning you receive this: he is the bearer of a writ to prohibit the court of assize at Gloucester from trying Edith Holgrave. — Surely justice should not be thus defeated. The messenger will rest for some time to-morrow evening at Northleach. — Could not the dress that accompanies this enable you to demand the writ from the messenger in the king's name. Remember, however, the writ must not reach Gloucester."

Calverley started at the boldness of the proposition, and resolved, much as he desired that Edith should suffer, not to engage in so daring an act. But in a few minutes, as his mind became more familiarized with the idea, much of the supposed danger of the undertaking disappeared. He might disguise his countenance so, that, aided by the dress, detection would be almost impossible; and even if detected, the letter, which, despite every effort at concealment, bore evidence of the Lady Isabella's handwriting, would compel her to exert all her influence in his favour. Nevertheless, Calverley, possessing less physical than moral courage, could not bring himself to look with total indifference upon even the possibility of personal danger, and he determined, therefore, to associate with him in the adventure the bold and reckless Byles.

Calverley would have willingly risked every thing *but* his personal safety to be revenged of her who strove to attach to him the suspicion of crime; and even when mounted on his steed, with a large dark cloak thrown over him to conceal the material of his dress, lest its singularity should attract observation, he could not help feeling a slight inward trepidation.

As they proceeded, the heath gradually assumed the appearance of a scanty wood, the trees became more numerous, the thickets of greater extent, and the animal on which Calverley rode was frequently impeded by the withering stumps of trees that had been carelessly felled. He alighted just at the point where an abrupt opening between the clustering thickets led by a circuitous path of not more than a hundred yards to the high road to Gloucester.

Here Calverley's quick ear caught the sound of the tramping of a horse — his heart beat quick — it might be a traveller journeying to Gloucester, but it was more probable that it was the messenger. He threw the bridle of his horse over the branch of a tree, sprang to the end of the path, and, concealing himself behind the underwood, discovered in a moment, by the dark medley hue of the rider's dress, that it was the man he expected. He hurried back, and, mounting his steed, waited till the echo of the horse's hoofs could no longer be distinguished; and then, giving the impulse to his own spirited animal, he was the next moment bounding at full speed after the messenger, followed at a distance by his accomplice.

Calverley was a good horseman, and it was but a short space ere he was within a few yards of the messenger, and shouting to him to halt. The man stopped, and, turning in his saddle, surveyed with some surprise (which could be seen even in the duskiness of twilight) the bright colours that distinguished the garb of a pursuivant.

"What! for Gloucester, friend? You must have been hard upon my heels the whole way, for —"

"No," interrupted Calverley, in an assumed gruffness of tone, and with something more than his usual authoritativeness, "my journey is ended now. The king has recalled that writ of prohibition you were to deliver to the judge. You are to return the writ to me, and proceed with your other despatches."

The messenger had heard — for state secrets will sometimes transpire — that the chancellor had a struggle to obtain the writ; and this knowledge, though it made him the more readily credit Calverley's assertion, yet vexed him that his master should be foiled. Looking, therefore, with a surly scrutiny at the steward —

"The writ," said he, "was given to me by my lord archbishop; and how do I know that I should be right in surrendering it to a stranger? Have you any order from his grace?"

"Order from his grace," repeated Calverley, sarcastically: "Do you not know, my good friend, that *your* master is in disgrace with *mine*, and that the eloquent William of Wykeham will, ere many days pass, be high chancellor of England. Come, come, give me the writ, and don't lose time. I must not stir from my saddle this night, unless to change horses, till I reach Westminster."

The news of Islip's dismissal confounded the messenger. This new pursuivant might be in the interest of William of Wykeham, and it would be ill policy to make an enemy where every good office might be wanting to preserve him his situation. At all events, there was little use in contending: he accordingly unlocked his bag, and Calverley, with a thrill of pleasure, felt the writ within his grasp.

A hasty salutation passed, and the horsemen rode off in opposite directions. Calverley then, sending his associate home, spurred on to Gloucester.

The steward's first care was to put up his horse at an inn a little within the north-gate of Gloucester; and then, proceeding on to where the four streets, leading from the four gates of the city, form a cross, he went down Westgate-street, and, passing the beautiful cathedral, presently reached the Severn. The evening was dark, and, looking cautiously round, he dropped the damask dress, — and, as he thought, the prohibitory writ, — in the oblivious waters.

CHAPTER V.

THE steward, after thus relieving his mind from all anxiety respecting the dress, proceeded to the sign of the Mitre in Silver Girdle-street, a well-known resort for certain useful adjuncts to the courts of law.

Calverley entered the Mitre, and, after calling for some wine, was shown into a little private room by the host. A few minutes after, the door opened, and a man entered and took his seat at the end of the table at which Calverley was sitting. The individual who thus invaded the privacy of the steward was a man not much above the middle height. His face had once been comely, but a close intimacy with the bottle had given to his countenance a bloated and somewhat revolting expression. The latter peculi-

arity, however, was only to be detected by the few who read the heart in the "human face divine;" and even these might be deceived into a prepossession favourable to the man; for his large full blue eyes beamed with much apparent benevolence, and his nose, though clothed in a fiery mantle, and tipped with two large carbuncles, was not a nose Lavater himself could with conscience have objected to. Large black whiskers, and thick bushy hair, with a beard of the same hue, had given him the characteristic *soubriquet* of Black Jack. On the whole, his appearance and deportment were those of a respectable burgher of the period. This man was not a stranger to Calverley, and Black Jack was, by some chance, still better acquainted with the person and character of the steward. He had heard every particular relative to the child's death, and had consequently divined the motive of the steward's visit to the Mitre, and, as he now and then cast a keen glance at Calverley, he might be likened to the author of evil contemplating a man about to engage in some heinous offence, the commission of which would connect them in still closer affinity.

A flagon of ale soon followed Black Jack, in which he drank Calverley's health with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, though this was the first time he had interchanged courtesies with the steward, who returned the compliment coldly, though not in that repulsive tone which forbids farther intimacy.

A pause of a few minutes ensued, and though each was anxious to introduce some allusion to the intended trial, yet both hesitated to begin; — Calverley, from a prudential fear of committing himself, and Black Jack from an apprehension of hazarding a chance of employment by too ready a proffer of his services.

The latter became tired first of his reserve, and perceiving that Calverley, like a spirit, would only speak when spoken to, resolved, with characteristic modesty, to plunge *in medias res*.

"Master," said he, "you are here, no doubt, on the business of the witch? For my part, I hold such creatures in religious abhorrence. That 's neither here nor there, however — can I do any thing to serve you? — That is the short of the matter."

"Master Oakley," replied the steward, with a grim smile which told he knew his man, "you have correctly surmised the business that brings Lord de Boteler's steward to the Mitre — you know the particulars of the affair?"

"I do."

"Well," resumed Calverley, "the evidence is not so good as I could wish. A country jury might acquit her."

"Aye, aye, I see — it shall be done — she returns no more to Wincombe —"

"But, you know," interrupted Calverley, quickly, "that she deserves death for the death she has inflicted."

"That 's neither here nor there: I never trouble myself about such matters — I am no schoolman — the judge will see to that; and, if she is to be disposed of, it matters little whether by substantial freeholders or myself and my eleven."

The price was now agreed upon, and the purse that accompanied the pursuivant's dress was more than sufficient to satisfy the exorbitant demand of the foreman.

"I may depend upon you, Master Oakley?" said the suspicious steward, pausing at the door.

"By the green wax! may you — Black Jack is a man of honour. As sure as Judge Skipwith sits on the bench, so sure shall I and my men sit in the jury-box. He is a carle to doubt me," said Black Jack, as Calverley shut the door — "Has he emptied his flask? No — by the green wax!

he seems to think as little of his wine as his money ;” and, after emptying the cup, left the Mitre.

The next night, being the eve of the trial, Black Jack entered the Mitre, and, ordering a fresh gallon of stout ale, proceeded on to the little room where he had seen Calverley, and in which, around an oak table which nearly filled the area of the apartment, ten men were seated. A measure stood before them, which they had just emptied, and were murmuring at their leader's close hand that restricted them to a single gallon.

This room was sacred to the confraternity: here they held their meetings—here they were instructed by their chief in the parts allotted to them in the shifting drama of crime. And here, under lock and key, pledged to the host, were the garments in which they appeared in the jury-box as respectable yeomen. Black Jack cast a rapid glance round the table as he entered, and perceiving one seat still unoccupied, he frowned with impatience.

“What!” exclaimed he, “has Beauchamp broke cover on such a night as this? Speak!”

“He has not been seen to-day,” said a sleek-faced old man who sat opposite.

“Not seen to-day—hah!—Has the fellow shrived himself? or is he laid up after last night's tippie?”

“Aye, master,” said another, “he is laid up, but I fear he has forgot the shriving. However, he will never again say guilty or not guilty in a jury-box, or kiss the book in justification of bail!”

“Saints protect us! not dead!” exclaimed the foreman. The man nodded assent:—“Then, by the green wax! we shall lose two of the best jobs we have had these three years. Come, come, Harvey, you only banter—the knave is lazy.”

“By Saint Luke, poor Beauchamp is as dead as he need be, master,” answered Harvey. “I saw him this morning, and his face was as black as—your own this moment!”

Black Jack seized the empty flagon, and was about to hurl it at the head of the facetious understrapper, when his arm was arrested by the old man who had first spoken.

“Hold, master,” said he, “you will find it difficult to fill Beauchamp's seat, without making another vacancy.”

The irritated foreman replaced the flagon on the table, but swore he would have no more jesting. “Poor Beauchamp,” continued he, “is gone—the cleverest man among ye—no whining—no qualms about him, when a shilling was to be earned by swallowing a pill or sending a traveller before his time to the other world! How unlucky, he had not postponed his flight for another week; this witch would then be disposed of, and the sheriff satisfied. Poor Jack, poor Jack! where shall we find a substitute—but a substitute must be had, if it were he of the cloven foot himself! This news has made me thirsty,” continued he, raising the pitcher to his lips, “but remember, no jesting.”

Black Jack then buried his face in his hands for some minutes, meditating how he should supply the place of the defunct Beauchamp. In vain he racked his brain; he knew many who would accept the offer, but they were untried.

“This assize will be a hungry feast,” he at length exclaimed; “we may bid adieu to the Mitre—I must refund the money I received on account of the witch, and the old Ferrett, too, must have his earnest money—what is to be done? Do ye know any one who could be trusted to stand in the shoes of Beauchamp?”

“We leave the filling up of vacancies to our foreman,” returned they.

“Aye, aye! ye shrink from responsibility, and throw all on my shoulders,”

returned Black Jack, snatching up a renewed flagon, and drinking freely, as if to forget his perplexity in the intoxicating influence of the beverage. "Aye, aye! but, knaves, the money ye have received must be refunded, and ye may go starve, or rob, for aught I care."

"But, master, where, think you, shall it be found?" answered Harvey: "you might as well dissolve this society, as think of making us refund what is already scattered in every corner of Gloucester."

"Dissolve this society! impudent knave!" retorted the foreman: "I should like to know what new profession ye are fit for: how could ye live but for me? Think ye the sheriff would expose himself by communing with such untaught knaves? No more sulkiness, or I take you at your word. Give me another swoop of the goblet." It was handed to him, and, after ingulphing a long draught, he slowly drew breath--his eyes were observed to brighten with some new idea, and, in a moment after, he started from his seat, exclaiming, in a burst of joy,

"By the green wax! I've got him!—I've got him at last—I shall be back in half an hour!" He then darted out of the room, leaving his confederates conjecturing who the welcome auxiliary was to be that should fill the void at the oak table.

It was a full hour, however, before the indefatigable purveyor reappeared, accompanied by a dark sun-burnt looking young man, attired in the garb of a dusty-foot or foreign pedler. He appeared to be one of an inferior description of galley-men, or Genoese merchants, (as described by Stowe,) who traded to England, and trafficked with a coin called galley half-pence. They chiefly resided at a wharf named Galley Key, in Thames-street, and travelled as itinerant hawkers through the kingdom. His countenance, however, was not that of a Genoese—it had more the appearance of the English cast of features, though, judging from its dark and seaman-like hue, it was many years since he left his native country.

"Come, my friends, be not cast down! Black Jack and his eleven are themselves again!" cried the foreman, exultingly. "Here, Harvey, fill up a goblet for our new friend. Poor Jack's chair is occupied during the assize; see ye make much of his successor."

"Is he not engaged as a fixture?" asked Harvey, with some disappointment.

"No, no, Harvey; his feet are not for the narrow limits of Gloucester. He is a bird of passage, that makes its periodical migrations, and cannot be called peculiar to one country more than another: in short, he is a kind of privileged outlaw."

"Aye, aye, master; he breathes the various atmospheres of Christendom, and yet I'll swear he is a dog of a heathen, notwithstanding, ha! ha! ha! No offence," he added, addressing the galleyman; "jest is privileged in this free society."

"Christian men," returned the dusty-foot, good-humouredly, "would be suffocated in this poisonous air you breathe, and would die, like the heathen, without benefit of clergy."

"That's right, galleyman—you have hit him there. That knave's skull is a perfect book of entries, and can furnish precedents for every crime, from high treason to a simple assault. He'll crack jokes to the last. But, by the green wax! we must think of a proper description for him, to insert in the pannel. Let me see—aye, I have it. A man from Worcester has lately settled at Deerhurst; his name is James Mills, a substantial man. Here, Harvey," as he took from his pocket a slip of parchment, and wrote the necessary particulars, and sealed it carefully, "take this to Lawyer Manlove. We must now see whether Beauchamp's clothes will suit our friend here."

The host was called in, and unlocked a drawer in which they were depos-

ited. The galleyman, with visible reluctance, arrayed himself in the garments, and he was observed to shudder more than once during the investiture of the dead man's apparel.

"He's better have some warm ale," said the old man we have before mentioned, with a sneer — "these garments seem to weigh down the spirit of our new guest."

"Aye, and well they may," returned the foreman: "it is not every man who could feel at ease in the clothes of a — Hang it! my brain wanders — fill up a fresh bumper." Another and another followed, and dispelled all symptoms of compunction in the heart of the foreman and his companions; till even their new guest, so powerful is example, was almost persuaded that conscience was a bugbear. It was late ere they separated, to reassemble the next morning for more important transactions.

The next morning, Sir Robert Skipwith, Chief Justice of England, entered the court, and took his seat on the bench. After the names of the jury were called over, Black Jack, and the eleven, respectively answered, and entered the box, clad in respectable yeoman's or burgher's apparel, and their countenances wearing a gravity suitable to the occasion. They looked like a jury to whom either a guilty or innocent prisoner would unhesitatingly have committed his cause. When the prisoner was asked whether she had any objection to the jury, and told, that if so, she might challenge the number prescribed by law, the attention of the spectators was naturally fixed on Edith, who replied in the negative; and her face and figure were certainly ill calculated to make a favourable impression.

Her face was shrivelled and yellow, and the dark full eyes that now, as it were, stood forth from the sunken cheeks, looked with a strange brightness on the scene, and seemed well adapted to stamp the character of witch on so withered a form. And perhaps there were few of those entirely uninterested in the matter who now gazed upon her, who would not have sworn that she merited the stake.

Calverley had beheld the group as they entered the court, and instantly averting his eyes from the mother and son, he fixed them upon Margaret.

The stranger's eyes that now gazed upon her, beheld her as a lovely interesting creature; but Calverley, who had not seen her since the day that Edith was arrested, saw that the rich glow which used to mantle on her cheek had given place to a sickly paleness. It is true, that as she entered the court, there was a faint tinge upon that cheek, but it fled with the momentary embarrassment which had caused it. That full dimpled cheek itself was now sunken, the lips were colourless, and the eyes dim.

A momentary thought of "Oh, had she been mine would she have looked thus?" and an execration against Holgrave, told that the demon had not wholly possessed her quondam lover; but the next moment, as Holgrave, after looking round the assembly, caught the eye of his enemy, the solitary feeling of humanity died away, and Calverley turned from the fierce glance of the yeoman with all the malignity of his heart newly arrayed against him.

After the usual preliminaries, the indictment was read, and Edith called upon to plead.

"Not guilty, my lord," she replied, in a voice so loud and distinct, that the surprised hearers wondered so feeble a creature could possess such a voice.

The evidence was then entered into, and Mary Byles was called into the witness box. A rod was handed to her to identify the prisoner, and she then, without venturing to encounter the look of her whose life she was about to swear away, deposed to having received the liquid which had occasioned the child's death, from Edith; and to certain mysterious words and strange gestures used by the prisoner on delivering the phial.

When she had concluded, Edith questioned her, if she had not, at the

time of giving her the medicine, warned her of its dangerous strength, and strictly enjoined her not to administer more than ten drops; but Mary, prepared for such questions, positively denied the fact, alleging, that Edith had merely desired her, when she saw the child looking pale, to give it the contents of the phial.

"My lord," said Edith, in her defence, "this woman has sworn falsely. The medicine I gave was a sovereign remedy, if given as I ordered. Ten drops would have saved the child's life; but the contents of the phial destroyed it. The words I uttered were prayers for the life of the child. My children, and all who know me, can bear witness that I have a custom of asking *His* blessing upon all I take in hand. I raised my eyes towards heaven, and muttered words; but, my lord, they were words of prayer — and I looked up as I prayed, to the footstool of the Lord. But it is in vain to contend: the malice of the wicked will triumph, and Edith Holgrave, who even in thought never harmed one of God's creatures, must be sacrificed to cover the guilt, or hide the thoughtlessness of another."

"Prisoner," said the judge, "have you any witnesses to call on your behalf?"

"My lord, my daughter was present when I gave the medicine; but I seek no defence."

Margaret faintly answered to her name, and entered the box. She delivered her evidence with so much simplicity and meekness, that it seemed to carry conviction to the majority of the audience. In vain did the wily lawyer for the prosecution endeavour to weaken her testimony on her cross-examination. Truth, from the lips of innocence, triumphed over the practised advocate, and Edith would probably have had a favourable verdict from an impartial jury and an upright judge; but from the present, she was to receive no mercy. The jury were bribed to convict, and the judge influenced to condemn. Skipwith now proceeded to sum up the evidence, artfully endeavouring to impress the jury with the strongest belief in the statement of the nurse, "who," he said, "could have no motive but that of bringing to justice the destroyer of her lord's heir;" and, on the other hand, insinuating, as he commented on Margaret's evidence, that her near relationship to the prisoner must be cautiously weighed: but ere he had concluded, a sound at the entrance of the court attracted his attention. Horton, the tall and dignified abbot of Gloucester, with his mitre on his head, his staff in his hand, and clad in the robes of his order, (that of Saint Benedict,) entered the hall. His crosier preceded him, bearing a massive golden cross; on his right and left hand walked two monks, and several others (among whom was father John) closed the procession.

A passage was instinctively made for the dignitary, who walked majestically on till he stood before the bench, and then pausing, he said in a clear firm voice —

"My lord judge, I demand, in the name of holy church, and in the name of the gracious king Edward, that you deliver up this woman, Edith Holgrave, to me. A writ from the chancery, signed by the royal hand, commanding her delivery to the ecclesiastical power, has been sent down, and how is it that thus, in opposition to the church's prerogative, and the royal will, I see the woman standing a criminal at this bar?"

"My lord abbot," replied Skipwith, bowing to the priest, "the writ you speak of has been recalled; a chancery messenger was here not three days since."

"Did he not deliver to you the writ?" interrupted the impetuous Horton.

"Pardon me, my lord abbot, but I believe I have already said that the writ has been recalled. The messenger, indeed, came with a prohibitory writ respecting the prisoner; but when within a few miles of Gloucester,

a royal pursuivant, expressly from the king, overtook him, and to him the writ was delivered."

The calm dignity of Skipwith's reply produced some effect upon the abbot; for in a tone less abrupt than before, he replied —

"My lord judge, that writ of prohibition has not been recalled. This monk, pointing with his staff towards Father John, left London two days subsequent to the messenger, and there was not then the least intimation of the royal mind being changed."

"My lord," returned Skipwith, with a slight smile, "know you so little of Edward as to imagine that no change could pass in his royal mind without the monk being privy to it?"

"But," returned Horton, losing his temper at such skepticism, "this monk was lodged in the palace of his Grace of Canterbury; and, at the very hour of his departure, his grace spoke as if the surrender of the woman were already accomplished. Would he have spoken thus had the writ been recalled?"

"Probably his grace was ignorant that the prohibition was recalled?"

"Simon Islip ignorant! However, you admit that a writ was sent?"

Skipwith bowed.

"Then as readily may you believe that it has been kept back through fraud and malice, and that you have brought this woman before a tribunal incompetent to judge of matters relating to witchcraft. But now, my lord judge, repair the wrong done, by delivering her up to a dignitary of holy church."

"Abbot Horton," returned the chief justice, gravely, "the poisoning has been satisfactorily proved, and a strong presumption of witchcraft created in my mind, from the mysterious behaviour of the prisoner when the drug was delivered to the nurse. But even were the witchcraft a more prominent feature of the case, I do consider the king's courts are empowered by the late act, which provides that all felonies may be heard and determined by the king's justices, to take cognizance of this crime. Witchcraft is a felony at common law."

"That act," replied Horton, hastily, "relates to local magistrates."

"And are the judges of the land to be less privileged than petty magistrates?"

"I came not to argue points of law, my lord judge," returned Horton, vehemently, "but to demand a right. Will you surrender this woman?"

"My lord abbot," replied Skipwith, "the indictment has been read—the evidence has been gone through with the customary attention to justice—I have only to finish my charge to the jury, and it will remain with them to pronounce her guilt or innocence."

The cool and determined tone of the chief justice exasperated the abbot; and, fixing a stern glance upon the judge,

"It is not justice, Sir Robert Skipwith," said he, "to wrest the unfortunate from the merciful interposition of the church—it is not justice, but a high contempt of supreme law, to set at naught the merciful commands of the sovereign—it is not justice to usurp a power that belongs not to you, in order to crush a friendless woman—it is not justice to set the opinions of an individual against the sacred authority of God's church. The church alone, I repeat, has power to judge in cases where the soul is concerned, as in heresy and witchcraft."

His voice had risen with each pause in the period, till the last sentence was uttered in a tone that reverberated through the court. An instant of hushed silence followed, and then, to the surprise of all, Edith raised herself up as erect as her feebleness would allow, and resting one hand upon the bar, she raised the other towards the abbot, and said,

"My lord abbot, my soul is guiltless of any crime which the church in its

mercy absolves, or the law in its justice punishes — I am neither murderess nor witch. As much would my soul abhor communing with the spirits of darkness, as my heart would shrink from destroying the innocent —”

“Peace, woman!” interrupted the abbot: “peace — presume not to interfere.” And then, turning to the judge, he added, “Sir Robert Skipwith, I again demand of you the custody of this woman.”

“Abbot Horton, you have had my answer,” returned Skipwith, in a tone of perhaps still more vehemence than the abbot’s.

The face of the provoked dignitary glowed, his eyes flashed, and he looked, in his glittering mitre and splendid vestments, like a being more than human, as, turning from the judge, and raising the staff he held in his right hand, he pointed it towards the assembled crowd, and said,

“I call upon this assembly to witness, that I have, in the name of holy church, demanded the accused — that I have demanded her in the name of the king, by virtue of his royal writ of prohibition, which has been basely purloined — and that, unmindful of that divine power, and despite the king’s express command, Judge Skipwith, the servant of the one, and an unworthy son of the other, has contemptuously refused this demand. But,” he added fiercely, as he again turned towards Skipwith, and shook his staff at the no less irritated judge, “the royal ermine is disgraced on the shoulders of such as thee — beware that it is not speedily transferred to one more worthy to bear it. I say again, beware!”

The abbot then lowered his staff, the crosierer once more preceded him, and, followed by the monks, he proudly walked forth from the court, the people, as he passed, forming a passage, and humbly bending forward to receive his blessing.

The eyes of the spectators, which, during this strange scene — this trial of strength between the lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries — had alternately wandered to each, were now anxiously directed to Skipwith alone, who hastily concluded his charge, and turned to the jury, as the arbiters of Edith’s fate. Calverley, among the rest, cast a look at the jury-box: and Black Jack, turning to his companions, proceeded, in the usual manner, to ask their opinions. Ten, after a minute’s consultation, decided that the prisoner was guilty; but the eleventh, the stranger, who had endeavoured to screen himself from observation, and whose changing aspect and agitation had betrayed the deep interest he took in the trial, positively refused to return a verdict of guilty. Black Jack cast an intimidating glance on the non-content, but he heeded him not; and as the jury-box, exposed to the eyes of the whole court, was not a place for farther debate, the foreman declared, that as one of his brethren would not agree with the rest, they must withdraw.

When the jurors were closeted in their private room, Black Jack asked the galleyman the reasons of his refusal.

“There was no evidence to prove her guilt — I could not, on my conscience, say she was a murderess,” returned the stranger, firmly.

“Conscience!” replied the foreman: “whoever heard a galleyman talk of conscience before? By the green wax! you forgot you had a conscience the day I first saw you. You recollect the court of *pit-poudré*, my conscientious dusty-foot, do n’t you?”

“Master Oakley, the thing is quite different,” replied the galleyman. “To cheat a fool of a piece of coin, is what neither you nor I would think much about; but to rob a poor, helpless old woman of her life — to hang her up at a gallows, and then to bury her like a heathen, where four roads meet — no, no; that must not be.”

The foreman’s face assumed a deeper hue than usual; he looked fiercely at the galleyman, but there was a determination in his weather-beaten face that made him pause ere he spoke. “Galleyman,” he at length said, “you

knew the business before you came : if you be so fond of saving old witches' lives, why did n't you say so, that I might not now be in this dilemma ?"

"You told me," returned the other, "she was a witch, and that she had killed the child. Now I know she is not a witch ; and neither you nor any one here believes a word of the poisoning."

"You heard what the judge said," returned Oakley : "but, however, you are a sworn jurymen, and here you must remain till you've brought your mind to bear upon the point."

"Aye, aye," said Harvey ; "four-and-twenty hours in this cold room, without meat or drink, will bring him to reason, I'll warrant you."

"Four-and-twenty days," said the stranger, in a voice so loud that the eleven started, "if I could live so long, shall never make me a murderer ! No, no ; you may go tell of the lushburgs, and hang me for a coiner," he said, starting suddenly up, and looking proudly at Black Jack ; "but, by the holy well ! you shall not make me hang the woman who nursed my mother, and prayed by her when every body else was afraid to go near her. She a witch !" he continued, with a bitter laugh — "by the holy well ! if she had been so, she would n't have given the poor orphan a groat and a piece of bread, to come back, after ten years, to hang her at last ! But this comes of carding and dicing, and sabbath-breaking. The fiend drives one on and on, till at last a man thinks nothing of murder itself."

"By the green wax ! all this ranting is unprofitable. No one could call Black Jack an informer when his word was pledged," interrupted the foreman. "The affair of the lushburgs has passed away — it shall rest so, though I might pocket some good pieces by a breach of faith, which, after this obstinacy, would not detract much from my honour. This woman is nothing to us, and surely the judge, who is paid to hang criminals, knows more about the guilt or innocence than I or my eleven. He told us, as plainly as man could speak, that she deserved to be hanged. But, remember, galleyman, neither you nor I break our fast till our opinions are unanimous ?" Black Jack winked at his companions, but the action was unnoticed by the stranger.

During this mock deliberation, Edith remained at the bar ; but when the hour had passed away, and no probability appeared of an immediate verdict, she was directed by the judge to be taken back to prison until the jury had agreed.

It was nearly noon the next day, when the under-sheriff entered the room to ask if their opinions were yet unanimous. The galleyman still refused.

"My friend," said Manlove ; "it matters little now whether you agree with your brethren or not, the woman is at this moment dying ! The verdict is, therefore, of little moment to her — she can never be brought into court to receive judgment — guilty or innocent, the law can have nothing to do with her ; but I would advise you to look to yourself, you will not be released till she is dead. Your brethren are accustomed to fasting, but you look ready to drop from your seat : and, if the woman linger many hours, you will certainly be guilty of *felo de se*."

With a little more persuasion and the most solemn assurances that the verdict could not possibly affect Edith, the galleyman at length reluctantly consented to agree with the eleven, and the foreman gave in the verdict of guilty.

"Let the prisoner be brought up for judgment ?" said Skipwith to the officer in waiting.

"It is impossible, my lord — the woman is dying !"

"Dying !" repeated the judge ; "yesterday she spoke with the voice of one who had years to live. Perhaps she wishes to defer the sentence, which she well merits, by feigning illness. If she will not rise from her bed, bring her into court upon it !"

The officer departed, and shortly afterwards reappeared, and informed the judge that the Abbot of Gloucester was standing beside the prisoner, and threatened to excommunicate the first who presumed to remove her.

"Does he? Does he dare think to evade justice thus — this subterfuge shall not avail!" exclaimed Skipwith with vehemence, and then musing an instant, he continued: "No, this subterfuge shall not avail — I will constitute the cell of the criminal a court of justice for this occasion. Officers of the court, proceed. I go to pronounce a just sentence:" and then, rising from the bench, and preceded by his officers, he departed to adopt the unprecedented course of passing sentence in a prison.

When the door of the dungeon was thrown open, Skipwith started at the unexpected sight he beheld; but, instantly recollecting himself, he walked on, determined to persevere. Edith was lying on her back, upon the mattress, her eyes half opened, and the ghastly seal of death impressed on every feature. Margaret and her husband were kneeling on one side, and the Abbot Horton and Father John standing on the other. A lighted taper and a box of chrism, which the monk held in his hand, told that the last sacrament of the church had been administered — a sacrament that cannot be administered to a condemned criminal.

Holgrave suddenly rose from his knees and withdrew to the farthest corner of the cell. Margaret continued to kneel, and raised her burning eyes towards the judge with terrified astonishment.

The abbot turned pale with rage as he beheld the somewhat abashed Skipwith enter.

"What! impious man! Do you thirst so for innocent blood that you harass the last moments of the dying! Retire, or I curse thee — depart, ere I invoke Heaven's wrath on thine head!"

"Insolent priest!" returned Skipwith, in a suppressed tone, as his look wandered from the abbot to the distorted features of the departing, "I come, not as an individual to harass, but as a judge to fulfil the law."

He then put on the black cap, and slowly commenced the sentence. The life that seemed to have departed from the still and contracted form, rallied for a moment — the eyes unclosed and fixed on the appalled countenance of Skipwith; and, when the concluding invocation of mercy for the soul of the criminal fell tremulously from the lips of the judge, she, in a voice low but distinct, answered "Amen!" and then a slight tremor and a faint gasp released the soul of Edith.

"The Lord will have mercy on her, vindictive judge," said the abbot, "though you had none; but she is now beyond your malice, and the glorified spirit will accuse you of this when —"

A wild shriek from Margaret, and a smothered groan from Holgrave, interrupted the abbot. The judge turned silently away, and left the dungeon; and, as there was now no prisoner to confine, the door was left open after him.

CHAPTER VI.

On the evening succeeding the day of Edith's decease, Black Jack's associates were, as usual, squandering away their ill-gotten money at the Mitre. A ribald song was just concluded, when a loud knock at the door caught the attention of the foreman: the door was opened, and the galley-man entered. His countenance looked pale and haggard, and without speaking, he threw himself in a chair.

"What ails you, man?" inquired Black Jack — "you look the worse for your long fast — here, drink," handing him a full pitcher.

"I want no drink," said the galleyman, impatiently, pushing away the vessel — "but stay, 't will do me no harm."

He then snatched the pitcher, and drank a full quart ere he removed it from his lips.

"Master Oakley," said he, "you played me false in this game. Do ye think if I had n't been fool enough to believe what you and that master sheriff told me, I would have given in till poor Edith Holgrave had slipped her cable. Did you not swear to me," added he fiercely, "that the law could not touch her?"

"True, O King; and though the judge did a queer thing in her case, yet the woman died like a Christian in her bed after all."

"Is she *buried* like a Christian?" passionately interrogated the stranger.

"No," he continued, in a quieter tone, "she was buried last night in the high road without kyste or shroud, or prayer, just as one would throw a dead dog overboard: but there is no use talking now — this is not what I came for. I came to ask if ye will give me a hand to get her out again."

"To dig up the old witch out of the grave?" inquired the foreman, with a stare of astonishment. "To unearth a dead body? By the green wax! man, your long fast has touched your brain!"

"No," said the galleyman, gravely. "I am as sound and as sober as ever I was; and, mind you, (casting a quick glance round the table,) I don't want any one to work for nothing — here, (he said, taking a small leathern purse from his pocket) is what will pay, and I shall be no niggard. You shall have money and drink too — speak! will you assist? There is no time to lose."

"What say you, brethren?" resumed the foreman, looking at the rest: "our friend served us — and besides, it is a pity to let good things go abegging."

The brethren felt no great appetite for a job so much out of their way — and sundry hems! and awkward gesticulations expressed their reluctance.

"Suppose we do assist," drawled out Harvey and three or four others; "who is to remove the body?" The galleyman hastily answered,

"Leave it to me — I fear not the dead — though if the old woman started from the grave, she could owe me no good will. Would you lend a hand if this Calverley should bear down upon us?"

"Aye, aye," said Harvey, with some show of courage; "we don't mind, unless the odds are against us, and in that case, you know, we must retreat."

"What!" said Black Jack, laughing, "think you squire Calverley would busy himself about the dead! Come, come, tell out the silver, and replenish the flagon: we are yours for this adventure — and, by the green wax! a strange one it is."

The sum agreed upon was paid; the liquor furnished and freely circulated; and the galleyman, now relieved from a weight that had oppressed him, gradually became cheerful.

It was about midnight when the party set out, well armed and muffled in large cloaks, and in less than two hours arrived within view of Winchcombe. Here, without entering the town, they turned into a lane branching off to the left, that led to Hailes Abbey, and down this avenue the galleyman piloted his companions. The way was narrow — at least two only could ride abreast — with a hedge on each side, and here and there the picturesque branches of a well-grown elm, displaying at this season (in the daylight) the soft green of the budding leaves. They had proceeded in silence about half a mile, when the galleyman suddenly paused.

"Yonder," he said, pointing to the end of the lane, "where you see the moonlight full on the ground — must be the place — at least it cannot be far

off, for there the roads meet. There is the lane and the road straight ahead to Hailes — then away to the right takes you to Sudley Castle and the other end of Winchcombe; and the road this way, elevating his left hand, leads on to Bishop's Cleave."

"But you have brought nothing to put the body in?"

"I brought a winding-sheet," replied the stranger; and when the grave is dug, and the coast clear, I'll wrap it round poor Edith, and lay her in my cloak — and ye will hold the corners."

"O yes," returned Black Jack; "we won't go from our promise. But where do you mean to take her?"

"To Hailes. — But when all is ready, I must go up the lane yonder," pointing to the right — "it is but a step, and fetch Stephen Holgrave — and the poor fellow shall go with us to see his mother buried as she ought to be."

The party then dismounting, secured their horses to the hedge; and, concealing their faces by masks of parchment, smeared over with paint, proceeded to the end of the lane: but a sudden exclamation from the galleyman, who was a little in advance, arrested the steps of all.

The moon was standing round and bright in a sky gemmed with stars, and, as the rover had just said, her beams fell unshadowed upon the open space where the roads met; — and here, directly in the centre, two dark figures were revealed. One was kneeling, while the other stood erect, holding at arm's length a cross. The galleyman gasped for breath as he drew closer to his companions, who, concealed in the shade of the hedge, looked eagerly at the objects of their alarm.

"Are they spirits?" asked the stranger in a subdued and terrified tone.

"O yes, my brave heart!" said the foreman, with something of ridicule; "they are spirits, but spirits in the flesh — like good wine in stout bottles."

"Aye, aye," said Harvey, encouraged by the unembarrassed manner of his leader; "they are spirits, I'll warrant, that can be laid by swords and staves instead of prayers!"

The galleyman breathed freer at this united testimony that he had nought to fear — for he feared none of this world; — and as he still gazed, almost entirely relieved from his superstitious dread, he observed the extended arm of the upright figure gradually fall to his side, as if his prayer or invocation had ended, and he stooped as if addressing his companion; but the latter still maintained his kneeling posture.

"It must be Stephen," said he, mentally; "he is mourning over his mother. Comrades," he said, turning to the others, "it is but the woman's son: at any rate there are but two. I'll go and hail them; and if ye see me stop, ye can come forward with the shovels." The galleyman went forward; but the moment he left the shade, his figure caught the eyes of him who stood erect. He spoke to the other, who, instantly starting on his feet, prepared himself to meet the intruder. The stranger, nothing daunted, hurried on, and, in an instant, stood before those who, by the menacing attitude they assumed, evidently regarded him with no friendly feeling.

"It is no enemy, bearing down upon you, friends," said the galleyman, in that tone of confidence which seems neither to suspect or purpose ill. "Tell me, is either of you the son of her who — who lies here?"

"Why ask you?" replied the taller figure, in a deep commanding voice.

"I will not answer till I am answered: but this I may say, be ye who ye will, that there is not a man I would befriend sooner than Stephen Holgrave."

"If you are a friend, I will trust you; and if not, I do not fear you," said Holgrave, raising the brim of a slouched hat that had shadowed his face — "I am Stephen Holgrave."

"Then may luck attend you," answered the galleyman, grasping his hand; "I thought it was you, and I came, not alone, for I have helpmates yonder to — to — do, what I thought would be a good turn for you — to bury your mother."

"It is an act of charity, stranger, to bury the dead," said Father John courteously; "and you are calling down mercy upon your soul like that pious man of old —"

"Aye, and I have need of mercy," returned the galleyman, "more need than he, whoever he was. But see, my mates are coming; — we must fall to work, for the night is wearing."

"But who may you be, stranger, who thus interest yourself for the injured?" asked the monk, "or why this disguise?"

"It is of no consequence who I am: and as to this mask, why! a man can work as well with it as without it."

The approach of Black Jack and three of the others (the fourth had been left with the horses) prevented any farther conversation; and, throwing aside their cloaks, the galleyman and the three jurors instantly commenced clearing the grave.

Holgrave drew the brim of his hat again over his face, and, folding his arms, looked silently on as the work proceeded.

"By the green wax!" said Black Jack, approaching at this instant, "as I stood yonder, reconnoitering the ground, a man showed his head behind that ruined wall!"

"'Tis the fiend Calverley, or one of his imps," exclaimed Holgrave, springing forward to the broken wall; but if any object had really presented itself, it had, in a singular manner, disappeared — for Holgrave, after a few minutes of anxious search, returned without having discovered the trace of a human being.

The body of Edith had been raised during his absence, and, with the winding-sheet wrapped around the clothes in which it had been laid in the earth, was just placed in the galleyman's cloak when Holgrave came up. An involuntary cry burst from the yeoman as he threw himself upon the ground beside the corpse, and, removing the cloth, passionately kissed the hands and the forehead.

"Stephen Holgrave," cried the monk, sternly, "where is thy fortitude? — you have broken your word. Has thy manhood left thee?"

"She was my mother!" said the mourner, rising.

When he had retired, the chasm was hastily filled up; and then Black Jack, the galleyman, and two other jurors, took each a corner of the cloak, and, preceded by the monk, reciting in a low voice the prayers for the dead, and followed by Holgrave and the remaining jurors, leading the horses, proceeded at a quick pace to the churchyard of Hailes Abbey.

In little more than half an hour, they arrived at the meadow in which stood the parish church and the abbey of Hailes. The church, a small, plain Gothic building, with a red tiled roof, stood in the centre of a burial-ground, of dimensions adapted to the paucity of inhabitants in the parish. A low stone wall enclosed it, and some old beech-trees threw their shadows upon the mounds and the grave-stones that marked where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet" slept.

Father John went forward, and pushing open a wooden gate, led the way to the osier-girt mound and head-stone over the grave of Holgrave's father. The body was deposited on the grass, and a space cleared of sufficient depth to receive it.

In the mean time, Holgrave had conducted those in charge of the horses to an old barn at a short distance, and then returned to the church-yard; and when the deceased was lowered into the grave, the yeoman knelt at the head, the galleyman and Harvey at each side, and Father John stand-

ing at the foot, pronounced, in a low but audible voice, the prayers usual on interment. The moonbeams fell on the church, so as to cast a far shadow upon the ground that lay towards the abbey; the foot of the grave was within the shadow, so that Father John's figure was little revealed; and the branches of a tree (against whose broad trunk Black Jack leaned) concealed Harvey, and cast a trembling shadow upon that side; but the light streamed full upon Holgrave and upon the galleyman, who was kneeling at his right hand.

At this instant, an arrow whizzed past Holgrave, and struck fire from the opposite wall. The yeoman sprang upon his feet; another shaft was sped, but instead of the object for which it was intended, pierced the hat of the foreman.

"By the green wax!" cried Oakley, as he lifted the perforated hat from the grass, "we shall need more graves, if we stand here for marks. Come round, and stoop close to the wall, and the trees and grave-stones may ward off the shafts. If they will, let them come to close quarters."

"You counsel wisely, stranger," said the monk, passing round, and standing in the shadow of the tree on the left of Holgrave, whom he forced to retire and crouch like the rest.

As this was accomplished, a third shaft tore the bark from the tree; and in an instant after, Calverley, followed by some of his myrmidons, sprung down from an aperture of the wall.

"Sacrilege!" shouted he—"sacrilege! Take them, dead or alive!"

Holgrave rushed on the steward, and the clash of steel rang through the church-yard.

The assailants, however, were somewhat damped by a loud blast from the foreman's horn, which was instantly echoed by one of his men; and the tramping of horses in the direction of the gate increased the panic. The retainers of Sudley at length retreated more speedily than they had approached, pursued by the galleyman and Harvey, who had burst from their concealment on perceiving them enter.

Byles, who was of the party, but had hitherto looked on as a spectator, (being determined to allow the steward and the yeoman to fight it out,) now glared fiercely around in search of an adversary. A cry from Calverley, however, drew him unwillingly to his assistance, and he sprang to the spot; but his uplifted arm was seized by a giant grasp, the axe wrenched from his hands, and himself hurled violently to the earth.

A strange sensation thrilled through the heart of the excited monk—an impulse to shed blood! The weapon of the prostrate Byles was snatched from the earth—it waved fiercely round his head; nature and religion warred, for an instant, in his bosom, but the latter triumphed: the weapon was flung to a distance; and Father John, crossing himself, disappeared among the tombs.

The combatants were as yet little hurt, for each was well skilled in the use of his weapon; but the steward, in endeavouring to ward off a blow that might have cleft his head, only succeeded at the sacrifice of his right ear, which was severed by the descending blade; and, ere he could recover this shock, Holgrave sprang within his guard, and wrenched the sword from his hand. A brief but fierce struggle ensued, in which Holgrave, at length, prevailed—the steward was thrown backward to the ground, and the next moment his enemy's hand was on his throat.

"Mer-c-c-y! mer-c-c-y! oh! mercy, Stephen Holgrave!" gasped he, as, with a despairing effort, he attempted to unloose the death-hold.

"Yes! mercy, Stephen—mercy to the coward!" exclaimed the galleyman; "he is not worth your vengeance."

"Mercy! he had little mercy for her," muttered Holgrave, bitterly, as he tightened his grasp.

At this moment, the voice of the monk was heard, as he rang the abbey bell, shouting "Murder! sacrilege! Ho! porter! murder!"

Holgrave, struck with awe, relinquished his hold, and Black Jack and his jurors instantly fled.

"Fly, knaves!" cried the galleyman, addressing Byles and Calverley, as he released the latter. "And now, meddling steward, if you attempt to interfere with her who is in that holy berth yonder, or injure the honest yeoman, her son, for this night's doings, the Lord have mercy upon you! Here, Stephen," (walking towards Holgrave, who had thrown himself beside the grave,) "up, and jump behind on my horse, for the cry of sacrilege will edge their brands, and friend or foe will have little chance. There — the abbey-gate is thrown open, and out they come with brand and torch."

"God speed you!" cried Holgrave, as the galleyman turned away, and grasped his hand: "God speed you! and reward you for this night: and if ever you or yours are in want of a friend, remember Stephen Holgrave." The galleyman hastily pressed the extended hand, and, springing to the gate, was in an instant on his horse, and galloping in the track of his companions, pursued, but in vain, by the arrows of the abbey retainers.

When Calverley saw his lord after this transaction, the scene, much to the amazement of the former, partook more of comedy than tragedy, for De Boteler, when he saw the head of his esquire minus an ear, could not refrain from laughter.

"Meddling knave!" said he, "why did you interfere? The woman was dead — what more would you have? Did you understand it to be the custom of the Lord of Sudley to war with dead enemies?"

This mortification only added fuel to the steward's wrath, and he determined to carry on, with all the vigour of soul and purse, an action which he had already commenced against his enemy.

Towards the end of June the sessions commenced at Gloucester, and Holgrave once more stood in the hall of justice — not as a looker on, but as an actor. Although, at the present period, the charge would have assumed a truly formidable shape, yet the deed was not then accounted even as *maihem* — for the simple reason, that the loss of an ear did not prevent a man from performing military duties.

But in this instance the offence was aggravated, at least in the eye of the law, by the manner and occasion. The law had not as yet contemplated the evasion of its decisions, by the disinterment of the bodies of criminals, and, consequently, there was no provision for punishing the deed. It was, however, taken into account in the verdict, and the damages were proportionably heavy. Holgrave, as may readily be imagined, had not a coin to meet the demand, and his crops, which had grown and flourished, as if by miracle — for they had been little indebted to his attention — were now condemned to be cut down, and put up for sale to pay the damages. The yeoman had often looked upon his plentiful fields with a feeling of pleasure: not that his mind had latterly been in a mood to find pleasure in the prospect of gain; but his house and his land were mortgaged, (for his mother,) and even in the darkest and most troubled scene, there is a beauty, a redeeming brightness, encircling the domestic hearth, — nay, perhaps, the heart clings more closely to home, and treasures, more fondly, the little nameless pleasures, and even the cares and anxieties of domestic life, in proportion to the bleakness of the prospect without.

His farm itself was at length forfeited, and Holgrave took shelter for the moment at old Hartwell's. The hut his father had reared when he married his mother, was still standing; the roof had fallen in, the ivy had grown over its walls; but even yet it sometimes sheltered the wandering mendicant, and often would the blaze of a large wood fire look cheerily

through the shattered casement and the broken door, and shed an air almost of comfort over the bare walls. Holgrave remembered the ruin, as he was considering where he could abide until Margaret, who was far advanced in the family way, should be enabled to travel farther. His resolution was instantly formed; and refusing the assistance offered by Hartwell, and some other neighbours, and as decidedly rejecting the idea they proposed, of striving to regain possession of his house, he requested Lucy Hartwell to look to Margaret for a day or two, while he sought out a place to shelter them; and then, without mentioning his purpose, quitted the house.

It was late in the afternoon ere Holgrave resolved to put the hut that had sheltered him when a boy, in a state to receive him now; but there were several hours of daylight before him, and even when the day should close, the broad harvest moon would afford him light to prolong his labour. The rushes that grew by the Isborne, the clay from the little spot of ground attached to the hut, and the withered and broken branches that lay thickly strewn over the adjoining forest, gave him ample materials for his purpose.

Holgrave set about his task with that doggedness of purpose which persons of his disposition display when compelled to submit. His misfortunes had in some measure subdued a pride that could never be entirely extinguished; — it might be likened to a smothered fire, still burning, although diffusing neither heat nor light, but ready upon the slightest breath to burst forth in flame. Even here he was interrupted by a visitor.

"Good even, Stephen," said Wat Turner, the parish smith, in as kind a tone as his abrupt manner could assume; "you are hard at work, master — are you going to set the old cot to rights?"

Holgrave answered carelessly, and without looking at the smith, continued his work.

"I think you are doing well, Stephen, not to allow the idle vagabonds to house here any longer. By St. Nicholas! when these holes are stopped up, and the thatch is put to rights, and the casement whole, and a couple of hinges put to the door, it will be a place fit for any man. When I go home I will send my son Dick, and the knave Tom, to help you."

"You need not trouble yourself," replied Holgrave: "what I want to do I can do myself."

Turner looked at Holgrave, as if he meant to resent the unsociable manner in which the reply was uttered; but speedily recollecting himself —

"I can't blame you, Stephen," said he, "you have had enough to sour any man's temper; nevertheless, I shall send Dick if I can find him; and Tom is a famous hand at thatching, and I will step over myself in the morning with the hinges and a latch for the door. But harkee, Stephen, if you wish to keep your *own* house, only say the word, and myself, and one or two more, will beat the old miser and his men to powder, if they do n't give it up again."

There was so much of good feeling in this rude speech, that Holgrave turned to the smith and grasped his hard hand.

"Hush! man," interrupted the smith, as his friend attempted to thank him; "say nothing for the present; only remember, if Wat Turner, or any belonging to him, can lend you a hand, just say the word, or come over to my forge and give me a nod, and we'll be with you in a twinkling."

One morning, about a month after this, Margaret had as usual prepared her husband's dinner. The frugal meal was spread by eleven o'clock, but Holgrave came not: twelve arrived, and then one, and two, and the dinner was still upon the table untasted. Margaret was first surprised, and then alarmed, but when another hour had passed away, she started up with the intention of going to seek her husband. At this moment, Holgrave pushed open the door, and entering, threw himself upon a seat. There was a wild-

ness in his eyes, and his face looked pale and haggard. It occurred to Margaret, that he had probably partaken of some ale with a neighbour, and having neglected his customary meal, that the beverage had overcome him. However, he looked so strangely, that she forbore to question him. He bent forward, and resting his elbows on his knees, buried his face in his upraised hands, and sat thus, ruminating on something that Margaret's imagination arrayed in every guise that could torture or distress. At length he raised his head, and looking on his wife with more of sorrow than anger—

"I was right, Margaret," said he, "it *was* Calverley that set the usurer upon taking the land. He gave the miser something handsome, and John Byles is to have it upon an easy rent!"

"John Byles, Stephen?"

"Yes, Margaret," replied Holgrave, "John Byles is to have it; he told the smith so himself. But," he continued, sitting upright in his chair, and then starting upon his feet,—"does he think he shall *keep* it?"

Margaret shuddered, as she looked in his eyes.

That night, the freeman and serfs that dwelt on the estate of De Boteler, and even the inmates of the castle itself, were alarmed by the sudden glare of red flames rising in a bright column above the tallest trees, and so fiercely burned the flame, that in a few minutes the horizon was tinged with a ruddy glow. There was an eager rush to discover from whence the phenomenon arose, and many were the exclamations, and many the whispered surmises, when it was ascertained that the cottage was on fire from which Holgrave had been so recently ejected.

Stephen stood at the door of his hut, looking with an air of derision on the vain efforts of the people to extinguish the flames; and Margaret wept as she saw the flames rising, and brightening, and consuming the house, which she still loved to look upon, even now that it was for ever lost to her. The roof at length fell in, and myriads of burning particles, sparkling like diamonds, showered for a moment in glittering beauty.

Holgrave was still looking on the conflagration, that had in a great measure spent its fury, when Wat Turner came up to him, and applying a hearty smack on the shoulder—

"A famous house-warming for John Byles," said he. "By Saint Nicholas! I wish his furniture had been in, to have made the fire burn brisker. 'Tis almost over now; there it goes down, and then it comes up again, by fits and starts: 'tis a pity, too, to see the house which stood so snugly to-day, a black and smoky ruin to-morrow; but better a ruin, than a false heart to enjoy it. By Saint Nicholas! 't will give the old gossips talk for the whole week. Aye, 'tis all over now; there will still be a spark and a puff now and then; but there's nothing to see worth keeping the carles any longer from their beds, and I think it is time that we be in ours—so good night. But a word with you, Stephen;—you did the business yourself this time without help; but mind you, if ever Wat Turner can lend you a hand, you have only to say so—Good night."

"Good night," replied Holgrave, though without moving his eyes from the now darkly-smoking ruin; and there he stood with unchanging gaze till the sky had entirely lost its ruddy hue, and the smouldering embers of the cottage could no longer be distinguished; and then he entered his dwelling, and, closing the door, threw himself upon his bed—but not to sleep.

CHAPTER VII.

AN hour had not elapsed since Holgrave retired to bed, before the cottage door was burst open, and Calverley with a strong body of retainers entered, and arrested him for the felony.

The fourth day from his committal happened to be a court day of the manor, and it was selected for the trial, for the purpose of showing the tenantry what they might expect from the commission of an offence of such rare occurrence. The hall was thronged to suffocation; for many more were attracted by the expected trial, then by the familiar business of a manorial court, and the people beguiled the time till the entrance of De Boteler in commenting on the transaction.

"Silence!" was at length vociferated by a dozen court keepers, and Calverley was asked if he was ready to begin. The steward answered in the affirmative, and slowly read the indictment, during which a profound silence was maintained throughout the hall.

"Are you guilty or not guilty?" asked Calverley, in a tone, the emotion of which even his almost perfect control of voice could not disguise.

"Thomas Calverley," replied Holgrave, firmly, "if you mean me to say whether I burned my cottage or not, I will tell these honest men (looking at the jury) that I did so. All here present, know the rest."

A buzz of disapprobation at this confession was heard, and the epithet "fool, fool," was faintly whispered, and then another loud cry of silence was shouted from the court keepers, as De Boteler appeared about to speak.

"You have heard his confession," said the baron. "See, steward, that he is sent to Gloucester, to receive sentence from the king's judge when he goes the next assize. Record the verdict, and let the record be transmitted to the superior court."

Wat Turner, whose attention was anxiously fixed on the proceedings, now stepped forward, and forcing his way till he stood opposite the baron, demanded, in a voice of mingled anger and supplication, "May I be heard, Baron de Boteler?"

"Be brief, Sir Blacksmith," replied the Baron, surprised at the abrupt question, "be brief with whatever you have to say."

"I was going to say, my lord, that poor Stephen here has called nobody to speak to his good character, but maybe it is n't wanting, for every man here, except one, would go a hundred miles to say a good word for him — But, my lord, I was thinking how much money that house of Holgrave's cost in building — Let me see — about twenty florences, and then at a shilling a head from all of us here," looking round upon the yeomen, "would just build it up again — I for one would not care about doing the smith's work at half price, and there's Denby the mason, and Cosgrave the carpenter, say they would do their work at the same rate — By St. Nicholas! (using his favourite oath) twelve florences would be more than enough — Well then, my lord, the business might be settled," — and he paused, as if debating whether he should go farther.

"And what then, impudent knave," asked the baron, — "what is the drift of this long-winded discourse?"

"Why then, my lord," replied Turner, "this matter settled, I and these vassals of yours here, would ask you to give this foolish man free warren again. We (mind your lordship) going bail for his good bearing from this day forth, and —"

The baron reflecting that his dignity would be in some measure compro-

minged by thus countenancing the smith's rough eloquence, commanded him in a harsh tone to be silent, although it was evident, from his altered looks, that his heart had felt the rude appeal. He beckoned Calverley to approach, and they remained for some moments in earnest discourse.

"Neighbours," said Turner in a whisper, "my lord is softened. Let us cry out for pardon." And the hint was not long lost upon the people; in an instant a deafening cry of "Pardon, pardon for Stephen Holgrave!" resounded through the hall. The unexpected supplication startled the astonished De Boteler, and a loud threat marked his displeasure at the interruption. Silence was again shouted by the hall keepers.

"Prisoner," resumed De Boteler, assuming a tone of severity, "you are forgiven; but upon this condition, that you renounce your freedom, and become my bondman."

"Become a bondman!" cried the smith, disappointed and mortified at the alternative: "Stephen, I would sooner die."

"Silence, knave!" said the baron; "let the man answer for himself."

"It was on this spot too," persisted the smith, "where, but two years ago, he did homage for the land you gave him: and by St. Nicholas, baron, boastful and proud was he of the gift; and if you had heard him as I did, that same day, praying for blessings upon you, you could not now rive his bold heart so cruelly for all the cottages in England."

Pale as death, and with downcast eyes, Holgrave, in the mean time, stood trembling at the bar. His resolution to brave the worst, had, with a heart-wringing struggle, yielded to the yearnings of the father and the love of the husband. The bondmen pressed forward, and marked the change; but that scrutinizing gaze which he would so recently have repelled with a haughty rebuke, was now unheeded, and his eyes remained fixed on the ground to avoid contact with that degraded class with whom he was soon to be linked in brotherhood.

Just as the baron was about to put the dreaded interrogatory, to the surprise of all, Father John entered the hall, and walked with a firm step towards the justice-seat. The monk had not visited the castle since his expulsion, and he had now no desire to stand again where his profession as a priest, and his pride as a man, had been subjected to contumely; but the desire of aiding Holgrave in his defence had overcome his resolution.

"What dost thou here, monk?" asked De Boteler, sternly, "after my orders that you should never more enter this hall."

"Baron de Boteler, I have not willingly obtruded myself. The duty of affording counsel to this unfortunate man impelled me to enter thus once again. Stephen Holgrave must choose the bondage, because he would live for his wife and his yet unborn child; but, ere he resigns his freedom, he would stipulate for his offspring being exempt from the bond of slavery."

He ceased, and fixed his eyes anxiously on De Boteler, who seemed collecting a storm of anger to overwhelm the unwelcome suitor.

"Audacious monk!" said he at length, "this is thy own counsel — away, quit the hall, or —"

"Hold, Lord de Boteler," interrupted Father John, calmly; "the threat need not pass thy lips: I go; but before I depart I shall say, in spite of mortal tongue or mortal hand, that honour and true knighthood no longer preside in this hall, where four generations upheld them unsullied."

"Strike down the knave!" cried De Boteler, rising fiercely from his seat. "Drive him forth like a dog," continued he, as the monk, without quickening his pace, walked proudly away; but no hand responded to the baron's mandate. A cry arose of "Touch not the Lord's anointed," and the monk was permitted to depart as he came, unharmed.

"Now, sirrah," said the baron, whose anger was aroused to the highest pitch; "say the word — is it death or bondage?"

Holgrave trembled; he cast a longing eager glance towards the door. Margaret was in the pains of labour, brought on by the shock she received on his arrest; and this it was that caused him to hesitate. His face brightened as he beheld the animated ruddy face of a serving boy, who breathlessly approached. He bent forward his head to catch the whispered intelligence that told him he was a father, and then, with a joy which he strove not to conceal, announced his selection in a single word — “bondage!”

“Then the child is born?” asked De Boteler.

“Yes, my lord, ~~he~~ is free!”

Calverley’s countenance displayed the mortification with which he received the intelligence, but he presented the gospels to Holgrave in silence.

Notwithstanding the recent flush of pleasure which warmed the heart of the yeoman, his resolution appeared again to forsake him — he endeavoured to speak, but in vain — he appeared to be overwhelmed by a variety of contending emotions; but the stern voice of De Boteler aroused him, and in a choked voice, he pronounced after Calverley the fealty of a bondman, holding his right hand over the book: —

“Hear you, my Lord de Boteler, that I, Stephen Holgrave, from this day forth, unto you shall be true and faithful, and shall owe you fealty for the land which I may hold of you in villeinage, and shall be justified by you both in body and goods, so —”

A loud blast of a horn, accompanied with the voices of men and the tramp of horses, interrupted the ceremony; and De Boteler, recollecting that his cousin Ralph de Beaumont, with other guests, were expected, turned to Calverley and ordered him to receive and conduct them to the hall.

“Stephen Holgrave, my lord, has not yet finished his fealty.”

“What! do you dream of such things when my noble cousin and guests are waiting for our courtesy? Away! I shall attend to the matter myself.”

Calverley reluctantly departed on his mission, cursing the interruption that prevented his enjoying the degradation of his rival, and the baron now inquired whether Holgrave had confessed himself his vassal.

One of the retainers, who stood by, boldly answered, “He has, my lord; Master Calverley gave him the words;” and the baron perceiving Holgrave’s hand still resting on the book, took it for granted; and then ordering the yeoman to be set at liberty, arose and advanced to meet his guests.

Holgrave, too, retired; and though secretly rejoicing that, legally speaking, he was as free as when he entered the court, he yet felt bitterly that in the eye of the baron and the barony, he was as much a vassal as if he had pronounced every letter, and sealed the declaration with the customary oath.

He returned home gloomy and discontented; and, as he stood by the bed of the pallid Margaret, and inquired of her health, there was nothing of the tender solicitude with which he used to address her, in his manner or in his voice.

“Thank God!” said Margaret faintly, as she took his hand and pressed it to her lips; “thank God, that you have returned to me without hurt or harm.”

“Without hurt or harm!” repeated Holgrave: “*she* would not have said so — oh! no, no, *she* would not have rejoiced to see me return thus; — but your soul is not like hers — if life is spared, it matters little to you that the spirit be crushed and broken: but Margaret, do not weep,” he said, bending down to kiss the pale cheek, over which the tears his harsh language had called forth were streaming fast. “Do not weep, I cannot bear your anguish now: I did not mean to speak unkindly — I love the gentleness of your spirit — you are dearer to my heart, Margaret, than even the freedom that was of higher price to me than the breath I drew!”

"Will you not look at the little babe?" said Margaret, anxious to turn the current of her husband's thoughts.

"Another time, Margaret—not now; but—the child was born before its father declared himself a wretch! and I will look upon it—poor little creature!" he continued, gazing at the babe as Margaret raised it up, "what a strange colour it has!"

"Yes," said Margaret, "and it is so cold! they think it will not live!"

"So much the better."

"Oh! don't say so, Stephen," replied Margaret, pressing the infant to her bosom; "I have prayed it might live, and I suppose it was only the fright that makes it so cold and discoloured."

"Maybe so," answered Holgrave; "but if your prayers be not heard, and the child dies——"

It seemed scarcely a human voice which had uttered the last words, so deep and hoarse was the sound, and there seemed more of threat, in the sudden pause, than if he had thundered out the wildest words. Margaret gave an involuntary shudder; and Holgrave, who was not so wrapped up in his own feelings, as to be wholly regardless of those of his wife, moved away from the bed, and sat apart, brooding over the dark thoughts that filled his breast.

On the second day after Holgrave had become a bondman, he was summoned by an order from Calverley to go to labour for his lord. His heart swelled as he sullenly obeyed the mandate, and Margaret trembled as she saw him depart. She looked anxiously for the close of the day; and, when she saw her husband enter with some vegetables and grain that had been apportioned to him for his day's toil, her heart was glad. It was true that the gloom on his brow seemed increased, and that he threw down his load, and sat for several minutes without speaking,—but she cared not for his silence, as she saw him return in safety.

The next day he went to his task, and pursued his labour with sullen industry, but no approaches to familiarity would he permit in the companions of his toils. He still regarded himself as a free man; he knew not how distant the day of his release might be; but he resolved, if an opportunity ever did occur, that he should not let it pass.

He disdained the villeins, and he felt that the free men would disdain him. He would not associate with those now, whom, in his day of prosperity, he had sought to befriend, and whose degraded state he had wished to ameliorate; nor would he associate with those who had so lately been his compeers, lest they should seek to befriend him or ameliorate his lot.

One evening, about the eighth day after the birth of his infant, fatigued in body, and troubled in spirit (for Calverley had that day exercised to the full the commanding power with which he was invested), he entered the cottage, and found Margaret weeping over the little babe.

"Oh, Stephen," she said, "how I wished you would return—for our child is dying!"

"Great God!" cried Holgrave, rushing forward to look at the infant,—the feelings of the father overcoming every selfish consideration.

"Oh, see!" said Margaret, her voice almost choked with her sobs. "See how pale he looks! Look at his white lips! His breathing becomes faint! Oh, my child, my child!"

Margaret ceased to speak, and her tears dropped fast on the little innocent she was so anxiously watching; presently it gave a faint sigh, and the mother's agonizing shriek told her husband that the breath was its last. Holgrave had beheld in silence the death-pang of his child; and now, when the cry of the mother announced that it had ceased to be, he turned from the bed and rushed to the door without uttering a word.

"Oh, Stephen, do not leave me!" exclaimed Margaret. "Oh! for mercy's sake, leave me not alone with my dead child!"

But Stephen heard her not; — indeed, he was a few paces from the door ere she had finished the exclamation.

All without the cottage, as well as within, was darkness and gloom. Perhaps, if the beauty of moonlight had met his view, he might have turned sickening away to the sadness of his own abode; but as it was, the dreariness of the scene accorded with the feelings which seemed bursting his heart, and he rushed on in the darkness, heedless of the path he took. As if led by some instinct, he found himself upon the black ruins of his once happy home. No hand had touched the scattered, half-consumed materials, which had composed the dwelling; the black but substantial beams still lay as they had fallen. Perhaps his was the first foot that pressed the spot since the night it blazed forth, a brilliant beacon, to warn the base-hearted what an injured man might dare. The fire had scathed the tree that had sheltered the cottage, but the seat he had raised beneath it yet remained entire. He sat down on the bench, and raised his eyes to the heavens; the wind came in sudden gusts, drifting the thick clouds across the sky; for a moment a solitary star would beam in the dark concave, and then another cloud would pass on, and the twinkling radiance would be lost. He gazed a few minutes on the clouded sky, and thought on all he had suffered and all he had lost: his last fond hope was now snatched away; and he cursed De Boteler, as at once the degrader of the father and destroyer of the child. But a strange feeling arose in his mind as a long hollow-sounding gust swept past him; it came from the ruin beside him — from the spot he had made desolate; and, as he looked wistfully round, he felt a sudden throbbing of his heart, and a quickened respiration. In a few minutes his indefinite terror became sufficiently powerful to neutralize every other sensation. He arose — he could not remain another instant; he could scarcely have passed the night there under the influence of his present feelings, had it even been the price of his freedom. He hurried down the path that led from the place where he had stood, and at every step his heart felt relieved; and, as the distance increased, his superstitious fears died away, and gradually gloom and sorrow possessed him as before.

And as he walked on, choosing the most unfrequented paths, a sudden gleam of light startled him, till he recollected that Sudley Castle stood before him; and, without bestowing a thought on the unusual number of tapers that were seen burning in various parts of the building, he pursued his way. But the sound of steps approached, and he stooped to conceal himself in the shade of a thicket, for he was not in a mood to talk, and, besides, he might now be subject to interrogatories as to his wandering about in the dark: he had before been accused as a deer-stealer, and why should he not be suspected now? The steps came from opposite directions; they met just before the bush where Holgrave had crouched; and a voice, that he recognised as a neighbour's, said,

"Holla! who is that? man or maid? — for, by the saints, there is no telling by this light."

"It is I, Phil Wingfield," replied one of the castle servitors: "my lady was took suddenly ill, and is delivered; and I am going to Winchcombe for a priest to baptize the child."

"My lady was in the right not to make much stir about it: I suppose there's not one in the parish knows any thing of the matter. But what is it, Phil?"

"A bouncing boy, the wenches say. But I wish, Dick, you would come with me — I do n't much like to be trudging this dark road by myself."

The man he addressed consented, and their steps were soon lost in the distance.

Holgrave raised himself erect as the men departed. Wild thoughts, such as he had never known before, rushed through his heart. It is dangerous to snatch from any man, even the lowest of the species, that which he values above every other thing. Be the thing what it may—be it grand or mean, base or beautiful, still the soul has clung to it, has treasured it up, has worshipped before it; and none but the bereaved can comprehend the desolation which the bereavement causes. Holgrave's idol was his freedom; it was the thing he had prized above all things else; it was the thing he had been taught to revere, even as the religion he professed. It must, therefore, have had a strong hold upon his feelings; it must have grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength: and this it is necessary to understand before a perfect idea can be formed of the hatred which he now felt towards the man who had wrested from him his treasure. It is true he might have rejected his terms, at the sacrifice of a thing of less value—his life; but there was then love and hope to contend against him—the hope of a man and a father. But he had now no longer hope; it had fled with the spirit of his little babe; its last faint breath had dissipated all the illusions of far-off happiness; and he now looked forward to a life of degradation, and a death of dishonour.

"Can it be?" said Holgrave, as he looked before him at the castle, which the tapers revealed—"can it be, that the lord of this castle and I are the sons of the same heavenly Father? Can the same God have created us?—and is his child to live and grow to manhood, that he may trample on his fellow-men, as his father has trampled on me? Is this to go on from generation to generation, and the sons to become even worse than the fathers?—No!" said he, pausing; "I have no child—Margaret must forgive me—I have only a worthless life to forfeit." He paused again. "I *will* attempt it!" he said, vehemently—"he can but hang me; and if I succeed, the noble blood they think so much of may yet——" Holgrave suffered the sentence to remain unfinished, and he rushed towards the castle.

There was a wicket in the northern gate, the common outlet for the domestics, which, as Holgrave had anticipated, the servitor had not closed after him. He entered, and stood within the court-yard; he heard the sound of voices, and the tread of feet, but no human being was near: he paused an instant to consider, and then, with the swiftness of a deer, he sprung towards the stables, and entered the one appropriated to the select stud of the baron. A lamp was burning, but the men who attended on the horses were now away, quaffing ale to the long life of the heir. The baroness's favourite palfrey was lying in a stall; he stepped across the animal, and, after pressing his hands on various parts of the wall, a concealed door flew open, and a dark aperture was before him. He stooped and passed through, and ascended a long winding flight of steps, till a door impeded his progress; he opened it, and stood in a closet hung round with dresses and mantles, and displaying all the graceful trifles of a lady's wardrobe. There was a door opposite the one at which he had entered, which led into the baroness's chamber, where there were lighted candles, and a blazing fire on the hearth. The floor was thickly strewn with rushes, and he could just perceive the high back of a chair, with the arms of the family wrought in the centre; he paused and listened; he heard the faint cry of a babe, and discovered, by the language of the nurse, that she was feeding it; then there was the hush-a-by, and the rocking motion of the attendant. In a few minutes, the sound of a foot on the rushes, and "the lovely babe would sleep," now announced to Holgrave that the child was deposited with its mother: then he heard the curtains of the bed drawn, and the nurse whisper some one to retire, as her ladyship was inclined to sleep; there was another step across the rushes, and a door was softly closed, and then

for a few minutes an unbroken silence, which the nurse at length interrupted by muttering something about "whether the good father had come yet." Again there was a tread across the rushes, and the door again was gently closed; and Holgrave, after a moment of intense listening, stepped from the closet, and entered the chamber. In an elevated alcove stood the bed of the baroness; the rich crimson hangings festooned with gold cord, the drapery tastefully fringed with gold, even to the summit, which was surmounted by a splendid coronet. Holgrave, unaccustomed to magnificence, was for a moment awed by the splendid furniture of the apartment—but it was only for a moment—and then the native strength of his soul spurned the gaudy trappings; he stepped lightly across the spacious chamber; he unloosed the rich curtains—the heir of De Boteler was reposing in a deep slumber on a downy pillow; beyond him lay the exhausted mother, her eyes closed, and the noble contour of her face presenting the repose of death. For an instant, Holgrave paused: remorse for the deed that he was about to do sent a sudden glow across his care-worn face—but had not the baron destroyed his offspring? whispered the tempting spirit. He raised the babe from the pillow without disturbing its slumber—he drew the curtains, and—he reached the stable in safety, closed the secret door, and arrived at the postern, which was still unfastened, passed through, and gained his own door without impediment.

"Margaret," said Holgrave, as he entered, put away that babe, whom your tears cannot restore to life. Here is one that will be wept for as much as yours.—Do you hear me, Margaret? lay your babe under the coverlid, and take this one and strip it quickly, and clothe it in the dress of your own infant."

"Stephen, what child is this?" her astonishment for a moment overcoming her grief. "The saints preserve us! look at its dress—that mantle is as rich as the high priest's vestment on a festival. Oh! Stephen."

"Silence!" interrupted Holgrave, sternly; "take the babe and strip it, and attend to it as a mother should attend to her own infant; and, mark me, it is your own! *your* child did not die! As you value *my* life, remember this."

There was a sternness in his tone that entirely awed Margaret. She continued to weep, but she took the strange infant and did as her husband desired her. The changing of its apparel made the little infant cry, but the change was soon effected, and then Margaret put it to her breast and hushed its cries. While this was doing, Holgrave had taken a spade and commenced digging up the earthen floor. The sight agonized the wretched Margaret, and when the task was finished and he approached the bed to consign the little corpse to its kindred earth, it was long ere even his stern remonstrance could prevail on the mother to relinquish her child. She kissed its white cheek and strained it to her convulsed bosom, and Holgrave had to struggle violently with his own feelings, that he too might not betray a similar emotion. But fortitude overcame the yearnings of a father; he forcibly took the babe from its mother's arms, and laid it in the cavity he had prepared; and then, as the glittering mantle of the stolen child caught his eyes, he took a small iron box, in which Margaret kept the silks and the needles she had formerly used in her embroidery, and scattering the contents upon the ground, he forced in, in their stead, the different articles the little stranger had worn, and fastening down the lid, laid it beside his child; and then, as swiftly as apprehension could urge, filled up the grave, and trod down the earth, to give it the appearance it had worn previous to the interment. A chest was then placed over it, and it seemed to defy the scrutiny of man to detect the deed.

Holgrave's heart might have been wrung at thus interring his own child,

but his face betrayed no such feeling ; it wore only the same stern expression it had worn since the day of his bondage, and it was only in Margaret's swollen eyes and heaving breast that a stranger could have surmised that aught of such agonizing interest had occurred. The bondman then threw another fagot upon the hearth, and, in the same stern voice of a master, bidding his wife tend upon the babe as if it were her own, without a kind look or word, he ascended the ladder, and threw himself upon a few dried rushes in the loft above ; where he lay brooding in sullen wretchedness over the wild and daring deed he had committed.

His meditations were soon disturbed by a confused distant noise — then men's voices and the tread of feet, and instantly the latch of the door was raised, the slight fastening gave way, and the intruders rushed into the room beneath.

"Are you drawlatches or murderers?" asked Holgrave in a fierce voice, as he started up and sprung to the ladder, "that you break open a man's house at this hour?"

"If you attempt to come down that ladder, this fellow's glaive will answer you," said Calverley, in a voice and with a look which the torch-light revealed, that told that his threat had meaning. He then cast a hasty glance around the apartment — for an instant, his eyes rested on the bed where lay the terror-stricken Margaret, who, at the first sound of his voice had concealed her face in the pillow. His eyes scarcely rested upon the bed ere he turned quickly to the men who attended him, and, in something of a hurried voice, desired them to examine the chest. What dark suspicion crossed his mind can scarcely be conceived, but Holgrave looked with a bitter smile upon the search as the men tore open the chest and scattered the contents in every direction. There was nothing else that required more than a cursory glance except the bed; Calverley did not look again towards it, and the men who were with him did only as they were ordered. At his command three men ascended the ladder, but ere they had advanced midway, Holgrave had grasped the end that rested on the entrance, and, in a voice that caused tremor in the craven heart of the steward, threatened to hurl them to the ground if they advanced another step.

"Do you think, meddling steward, that I have been in the chase again? Do you expect to find another buck?"

"Proceed — heed not this bondman's raving!"

Holgrave, conceiving that farther resistance might awaken suspicion, folding his arms across his breast, suffered the men to ascend, and looked on in silence while they carefully examined the loft. But here, after a minute search, was found nothing to repay their trouble. They descended, and Calverley said, "There is nothing here to confirm suspicion; but the son of Edith Holgrave is likely to be suspected when evil is done. We depart," he said to his followers, "but there shall be a watch kept on this fellow."

Holgrave looked contempt, and spoke defiance; but Calverley retired without seeming to heed either his looks or his words.

In the morning he went to his task at the usual hour, not however without again cautioning Margaret respecting the child. Soon after his departure Lucy Hartwell entered, to talk over the strange news she had just heard, and to offer her services to Margaret.

"How are you, Margaret? How is the babe?"

"The child is better," replied Margaret, "but I am very ill."

"I am sorry to hear that—I hardly thought that the child would live. Here, Margaret, take a little of this broth, it will do you good.— Oh, there are such strange doings at the castle! Yesterday evening, my lady was suddenly put to bed of a boy, and the child has been stolen away, nobody can tell how. Roberts, one of the castle guard men, told my father just

now, that my lady had accused Sir Robert Beaumont, my lord's cousin, of stealing the child, and that Sir Robert is making ready to depart, vowing never to enter the castle again. But Martha, my lady's maid, said, in his hearing, that nothing but an evil spirit could have stolen it away. She declared that she saw old Sukey, the nurse, put the child safely beside my lady, and then, as her ladyship seemed inclined to sleep, she went from the bed-chamber into the anti-room, and there she sat till the priest, who had come from Winchcombe, was ready for the baptism, and then she entered the chamber to tell the nurse; and when old Sukey went to the bed to take up the child, behold it was gone! Whereupon old Sukey gave such a dreadful scream, that the baroness started up, and discovering the loss of the child, could scarcely be kept in bed, and called the old nurse and every one who approached her murderers; and then the whole castle was in an uproar, and my lady presently hearing the sound of Sir Robert's voice in the anti-room, shrieked that it was he who had stolen her child; and then she fell into such a fit of crying, that her heart sickened, and she swooned away. But what ails you, Margaret, are you worse?" Margaret answered, faintly, "that she wished to sleep;" and Lucy's humanity, overcoming her strong desire to speak of the strange event that had happened, she left her, after doing the little services the invalid required, to her repose.

Towards the close of the day, Father John came to see his sister. "You are ill, my child," said the monk, as he drew a chair to the side of the bed, and gazed anxiously at her pallid cheek and swollen eyes. Margaret answered incoherently.

"Your child," continued he, "is it — is it still alive?"

"My child is well now!" said Margaret, in a stifled voice.

"Well! Margaret, can it be possible! — Let me look at the babe, for I fear you must be deceiving yourself."

"It is sleeping," said Margaret; but the next moment the babe, who had slept with short intermission during the day, awoke, and no soothing, no attentions of its nurse, could hush its cries. Margaret saw that the eyes of her brother were riveted on the child, and she strove anxiously to conceal its face.

"It is strange!" said the monk; "yesterday the low moaning sound it made, seemed to threaten immediate dissolution; and to-day its lusty cries seem those of a healthy child — it is quiet now — give me the babe in my arms, and let me look at it?"

Margaret did not immediately accede to his wish, and the monk looked at her with a strange inquisitiveness — something crossed his mind, but what could he suspect? He again asked Margaret, but she still hesitated. He started from his seat, and paced up and down the floor. He then stopped suddenly before the bed. Margaret had laid down the infant, and had covered it with the bed-clothes.

"Margaret," said the monk, fixing his eagle glance upon his sister, "that is not your child!"

"Hush! hush! Oh! for the life of my husband, say not so!" The sternness of the monk's countenance gradually softened as he gazed upon his agonized sister, and after the space of a minute he said, in a calm voice:—

"Fear not me, Margaret — fear not that I would add to the grief which has weighed on your heart, and paled your cheek, and dimmed your eye. Fear not that I would add one sorrow to the only being who attaches me to my kind, and who tells me I am not entirely alone! But, I ask you, Margaret, not as a servant of the High God, but as an only brother — as one who has loved you as a father, and has watched over you from infancy even until now; I ask you to tell me what you know of that child?"

Margaret bent her head forward and covered her face with her hands, but made no reply. In vain the monk reiterated his request. In vain he exhorted her — in vain he assured her that no evil should befall her husband from whatever disclosure she might make. Margaret still hid her face and remained silent. Her silence discomposed the monk. He continued to gaze upon her with a troubled countenance. Anger for the cruelty that could premeditatedly deprive a mother of her offspring, and alarm for the consequences that might result to Holgrave, could have been read in his contracted brow and anxious glance. His sister's unwillingness to speak confirmed his suspicions, and he felt as fully convinced that the child that lay before him was the baron's son as if he himself had witnessed the theft.

"Margaret," said John, "your silence does but confirm my suspicions. It is a cruel revenge — but it is done — and Stephen's life shall never be put in jeopardy by a breath of mine. He has suffered, but till now he had not sinned! But his sin be between his conscience and his God: he paused for a minute, and then looking tenderly upon his sister, he said as gently as he could, "Farewell!" and being anxious to avoid an interview with Holgrave, abruptly departed.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT a fortnight after the birth of the baron's son was the feast of All-hallows, and from All-hallows eve to the Purification of the Virgin, was little less than a continued festival. Mummers and maskers, attired in fantastic habits, wearing garlands of holly and ivy on their heads, and bearing branches of the same in their hands, were to be met, dancing and singing along the roads that led to the castles, of the barons, or to the broad beetling houses of those of a lesser degree. The castles the manor-houses, and even the dwellings of those whom, one would think, could have no earthly object in view in their building but convenience, accorded little with, or rather was in direct opposition to, our present ideas of domestic comfort. The spaciousness of the apartments, lighted, perhaps, by a solitary window, whose small chequered panes, encased in a heavy frame, and divided into three compartments by two solid beams, curved, and meeting at the top in a point, were rendered still more gloomy by the projecting buttresses of the windows above; but still the very construction of the buildings was favourable to hospitality. A dozen, or twenty, or thirty, or fifty persons, according to the rank of the host, might be accommodated, and not the slightest inconvenience felt. The more the merrier, was undoubtedly the adage then: guests were greeted, especially on winter nights, with a genuine hospitable welcome, because, although the capacious hearth looked snug and cheerful, there was a dreariness in the void beyond — in the undefined and distant shadows of the apartment — that could alone be dispelled by additional lights and smiling faces. It will consequently be a natural conclusion, that in the castles of the nobles, and in the houses of those immediately or progressively beneath them, the arrival of the merry mummers was hailed with almost childish delight.

In addition to this annual exhibition of mirthful mummery, the town of Winchcombe was enlivened by a fair, periodically held, on the festival of All-hallows. The fair-green lay just beyond the town, enclosed on one side by the town walls, and on the opposite by an abrupt, wooded hill. All Winchcombe was in a bustle; the ale-houses were crowded with visitors, and the streets filled with strangers; young artizans or yeomen were escorting their favourite damsels to the fair, to show their gallantry by purchasing some of the various articles so temptingly displayed, as presents for the maidens. Bodkins and fillets for the hair, and ribbons of every colour, except scarlet or crimson; and furs, principally cat-skin; and spices, and fine and coarse cloths of medley, and russets, and hoods, and mittens, and hose, were among the miscellaneous wares exhibited for sale.

But there was one stall that particularly attracted the eyes of the fair-folks, by the spices, silks, damasks, fine cloth, gold and silver cords and ornaments, furs, &c. it displayed. The owner of this stall was evidently a peddling Genoese merchant, or, as they were then called, galley-men. These foreigners generally bore a bad character—they were looked upon with suspicion; but, although suspected and disliked, they sold their merchandise, passed their base coin, and returned to Genoa to purchase, with English gold, fresh cargoes for Britain. They somehow or other sold their goods cheaper than the native dealers, and their coin, if even bad, would generally circulate through a few hands before it would be detected, and, consequently, those who purchased were seldom the losers.

The beauty and richness of the chief portions of their cargoes ensured them a demand from the superior classes; and if a noble, or courtly dame, or maiden, or knight, or even esquire, would not be seen bargaining personally with the foreigners, there were always officious agents who could transact the business, and have some trifle as an acknowledgment from the itinerant merchant. The galleyman, who was displaying his merchandise on the fair-green of Winchcombe, had, towards the close of the short gloomy day, disposed of a considerable portion of his stock. The damsels of the ladies residing in the vicinity, bought even more than they were ordered, so well were they pleased with the animated glance of the foreign merchant's black eyes, and with the pretty, almost intelligible, compliments he paid them; and, above all, with the smiling liberality with which he rewarded every purchase.

In the villages, the distinctions of dress created by law were pretty generally observed, but in the towns that law was as generally evaded: furs, and colours, and embroidery, were worn by those who had no right to them, except the single one of purchase. In some instances, the law would take cognizance of the violation of its prohibitions; a fine would be imposed, but even this could not check the vain assumption;—there was no law to prevent people buying, and those who could purchase forbidden finery, would, in despite of penalties, contrive some means of wearing it. But to return to our foreign merchant.

There was now scarcely light to distinguish external objects, when a sudden rush was heard from the town, and, in an instant, a dozen persons surrounded the peddling merchant, and seizing him violently, while uttering threats and imprecations, dragged the dusty-foot to the court of Pie-powder.* As they were hauling him along, the crowd increased, the fair was forsaken, all pressing eagerly forward to learn the fate of the unlucky pedler. The galleyman seemed perfectly to comprehend the nature of his

* The court of Pie-powder (*pie-poudre*) was a court held at fairs for the redress of all grievances happening there—so called, because justice must be done before the dust goes off the plaintiff's or defendant's feet. See statute 17 Edward IV. chap. 2., confirming the common law usage of, and detailing some new regulations for, these courts.

danger — not by the changing colour of his cheek, for that exhibited still the same glowing brown — but by the restless flash of his full black eyes, glancing before and around, as if looking for some chance of escape.

The court of Pie-powder was situated at the extremity of the fair-green, about twenty paces beyond the last stall: the court was a kind of tent, with a large, high-backed chair in the centre for the judge, a long table being placed before him, on which were balances and weights of various descriptions, to ascertain the truth of any charges that might be preferred against the sellers at the fair: there were also a smaller balance, a stone, and a small phial of liquid, to prove the weight and purity of any coin that might be doubted. At each extremity of the table was a bench, on which sat six men, to act as jurors. Although in a fair, the court was conducted with some attention to propriety; the clerk, who sat as judge, assumed as much importance as a dignitary of a higher tribunal; and, as the crowd approached, hallooing and vociferating, with the culprit, two men, who stood at the door with maces in their hands, prevented the rush of the people: and, by order of the judge, the accuser, the offender, and two witnesses were the only persons permitted to enter. The charge was laid; — the foreign dusty-foot was accused of defrauding the accuser's wife, one Martha Fuller, of the value of half a noble.

The *lushburgs* (as this base coin was called) were then produced. The judge took the money, and was raising the phial to apply the test, when the accused, whose hands had been left at liberty, drew something from his breast, and threw it on the lamp which was burning before him. The lamp was extinguished; — a sudden explosion took place; burning fragments were scattered in every direction; a strange suffocating smell filled the tent, and nearly stifled the astonished spectators. Before they could recover from their surprise, the galleyman had knocked down the two witnesses, crept under the canvass of the tent, and, with the bound of a deer, reached the wooded hill that lay at a short distance behind.

The pause of astonishment was scarcely of a moment's duration; and then, like the hounds pursuing a hare that had broke cover, the whole multitude, uttering a wild shout, sprung after the flying stranger. The lightness of the galleyman's foot had often befriended him, upon occasions similar to the present, but now his bounding step seemed but of little advantage — for the foremost of the pursuers was as fleet as himself. There were few spirits more bold, more constitutionally brave, than this stranger's; — he had struggled with the world till he had learned to despise it; he had buffeted with the waves till he had deemed them harmless; and, up to the last five minutes, he would have sworn that there was neither a man nor a sea that he feared to meet. But the stranger had, at that time, no law in England; — the gallows-tree by torchlight, the execrations, the tumult, the sudden hurrying of the soul away without even a moment to call for mercy; — all this was distinctly before the eyes of the fugitive. He had seen others act a part in such a scene, and his turn seemed now at hand; — and the galleyman almost groaned at the thought of dying unshrived.

A large thicket, at this moment, gave the dusty-foot an opportunity of doubling, and, for an instant, diverging from the straightforward course, though it availed him little, he seemed to feel the breath of his pursuer on the back of his neck; his foot sounded as if at his heels; he drew his garment closely around him, turned suddenly to the right, and, bounding from the ground, the next instant a splash was heard in the little river, and the fugitive was safe from his pursuer.

We before observed that Stephen Holgrave's dwelling was situated at a short distance from the little Eastbourne; and, on the night of All-hallows fair, a quick knocking was heard at the door just after Holgrave had retired

to rest. Holgrave, concluding it was some mandate from the castle, arose, and, in a surly voice, demanded who was there?

"A stranger who wants a shelter — open the door."

It was instantly opened; and the galleyman, with his saturated garments, and his long black hair hanging dripping over his shoulders, entered the cottage.

"Why, what mishap has befallen you?" inquired Holgrave, in surprise.

"Ask no questions," answered the dusty-foot, "but give me a cup of malmsey."

"Malmsey! and in a villain's cottage," replied Holgrave, bitterly. "No, no; but here is a small flask of sack which a neighbour brought to my wife: she will little grudge it to a man in your plight."

While Holgrave was speaking, he emptied the flask into a horn, and, handing it to the galleyman, the latter eagerly clutched it, and, with astonishing rapidity, swallowed the contents.

"Is that all you have?" inquired the dusty-foot.

"Yes," replied Holgrave; "and enough too, I think, for any reasonable man at one time."

"Nonsense!" returned the stranger, "I would drink ten times as much and be nothing the worse. But hark you, Stephen Holgrave — I have come to you for shelter, and I expect you will give it."

"While I have a roof the wayfaring man shall never sleep —"

"I do not talk of sleep," interrupted the stranger: "I would not trouble any man for the sake of a night's rest: but to be plain with you, my life is sought for — the hue and cry is even now after me; — so, if you mean to keep your word, give me some dry clothing, and hide me — anywhere."

Holgrave turned from the galleyman in silence, and, opening the large chest, took out his only spare clothing — a suit of medley; and, as he offered it to the stranger, he looked at him with an earnestness which attracted the attention of the galleyman.

"You do not know me?" asked the latter.

"No," replied Holgrave, "I cannot call your face to mind; but surely I must have heard your voice before."

"Maybe you have; but that matters little; I know you are an honest man, and were I even your enemy, you would not betray me."

"No," said Holgrave, "I would betray no man; but I should not like to harbour — a man that had —"

"Had what?" interrupted the galleyman, impatiently. "I wish I had never done worse than I have done this day, Holgrave; I have neither hurt nor harmed; I only gave a pretty little fair-going dame a Genoese piece instead of an English one."

"Ah! well," said Holgrave; "if she was fool enough to trust a dusty-foot, she must look to it. I care not what you did, so long as you kept your hand from blood: so come up this way." He then took one of the branches that were still blazing on the hearth, and conducted the fugitive to the loft.

The stranger instantly divested himself of his wet apparel, and attired himself in Holgrave's yeoman's garb; and then, with the natural regret of one accustomed to traffic, he drew from a secret pocket of his wet doublet a bag of coin, the wreck of his merchandise, and with a sigh for all he had lost, placed it in his bosom. His dagger was also stuck in his doublet, so that if necessity came, he might use it; and then attentively listening to Holgrave's directions, he threw himself upon a heap of rushes in a corner, and soon after his host had withdrawn to throw the tell-tale garments into the Isborne, he fell into the short light slumbers of a seaman.

The first sound of a far-off shout instantly dispelled his sleep; he started

on his feet, and as he became convinced it was really the hue and cry, he raised a small flap in the roof, as Holgrave had directed, and forcing himself through, slid down into a sort of rude garden at the back of the dwelling; then springing forward till he came to a dry well, he leaped, with a dauntless heart and sound limbs, ten feet below the surface of the earth.

The hue and cry passed on its noisy course without heeding the cottage; and, about an hour after, Holgrave threw down a rope to the galleyman, who, with the agility of one accustomed to climb, sprung up the side of the well, and entered the cottage with his host.

"You can now go to the loft, and lie down again," said Holgrave; "but do not sleep too soundly; for if any one comes in to look for you, you must go to your old hiding-place. You see, stranger, that mine is not the best place you could have chosen; there is ill blood between me and the castle folks, and they will not let any chance slip to let me know that even this hut, poor as it is, is not my own, but must be entered and searched as they would the kennel of a dog. You know me, stranger, though I know nothing of you, except your voice. You called me by my name, and you addressed me as a yeoman — think you that I am a yeoman?"

"Yes," said the galleyman; "I knew you were a freeman, and I heard you were a yeoman."

"Yes, I was a freeman, and I was a yeoman; but I am now a — villain! Ay, stare — stare! I live through it all. It was but the space of a moment — the drawing of a breath, that changed me from a man who dared look the heavens in the face, and close his door, if he listed, on even the baron himself, to a poor worm, that must crawl upon the earth, and has not even this (taking up a log of wood) that he can call his own. True, it was not my birthright, but I earned it, in sweat, in hunger, and cold, and I fought for it amidst swords and lances — and I sold it, like a traitor, for — her!" And he pointed, with a look of bitter reproach, to his wife.

The galleyman, for the first time, fixed his eyes upon Margaret, who was sitting, nursing her little charge within the recess of the chimney. She had latterly been accustomed to unkind language from her husband; but the bitterness with which he had now alluded to her before a stranger, brightened the delicacy of her complexion with a passing glow, and caused a sudden tear to tremble in her eye.

"And, by the good cargo I lost even now at Winchcombe," said the galleyman, after looking at her for a moment, "you could not have sold it to better advantage. Such a wife would make any man think little of her price. If you *have* made yourself a villain, is the world so small that there is no place but the manor of Sudley to live in? Come, come, let us talk like friends — we are not such strangers as you suppose."

"No," said Holgrave; "but I cannot think where we have met."

"Never mind that. As for me, I am not quite foundered, although I have left a cargo behind at Winchcombe that would have bought a dozen bondmen's freedom. Come with me to London: I have part of a galley of my own there, and you may either stow away in some hole of the city, or slip your cable, and be off for Genoa, where I'll promise you as snug a berth as a man could wish for. Besides, there is your child — is it a boy?"

Margaret nodded assent.

"Yes, there is your boy — would you let him grow up a bondman?"

"No," said Holgrave. "Now you speak of the boy, I will not leave this place. Let him live and toil, and suffer, and —"

"And if he was a headstrong boy, and felt one stroke of the lash," interrupted the galleyman, "would he not fly from the bondage, even to become a thing like me? Hark you, Holgrave," he continued, starting upon his feet, extending his right arm, and fixing his full black eyes on his face —

"Hark you, Holgrave! my father was as honest a man as ever drew the

breath of heaven; and yet I trade and traffic in cheatery. My father's greatest oath was 'the saints defend us!' and he would not drink a second cup at one sitting; and yet there is not a holy name that I have not blasphemed every day for these nine years, and scarcely a day that I have not drunk more—more than my head could well carry. My father could not have slept if he had missed the shrovetide, and yet I have passed years, aye, and am likely to pass my life, without a single shrift. Yes, yes, he continued, dropping his arm, and sinking down upon his seat, I have done every thing but—murder"—(Margaret crossed herself)—"and scarcely can I clear myself even of that; and all because I was a bondman's son! Yes, Holgrave, I know what bondage is; I know what it is to be buffeted and railed at, and threatened with the tumbrel. I never was lazy; but I hated to be driven. All men are not made alike; some are only fit to be slaves, while others are endowed by nature with a high, proud spirit—of such was your mother."

"My mother! what know you of her?"

"Never mind that," replied the galleyman; "but as for your mother, she was a good and a holy woman; but I say she was proud! You are proud, or you would not think so much of being a villein. And is it not likely that your boy will be as proud as either?"

"If that child takes after his father," said Holgrave, "he will have pride enough."

"And if he has," returned the dusty-foot, "he cannot have a greater cause. It is all very well for the great,—it looks well upon them; and even the decent chapman and yeomen get little harm by it: but for the poor man to be proud; to have the swelling heart and the burning cheek—oh! it is a curse!" He raised his voice as he spoke, and then sinking it to a whisper, added—"and if it is sin, surely it has its punishment."

As Holgrave looked at and listened to the stranger, his heart warmed, and he forgot for a time his own selfish feelings; but the picture the galleyman had drawn, and which his own soul acknowledged to be too true, determined him not to accept his offer. The baron had earned for his son the curse of "the swelling heart and the burning cheek," and the lad should know the toils and sufferings of a bondman.

"We shall talk further," said Holgrave: "in the mean time, we must consult for your own safety. If your father was a villein of this barony, it is not likely that the old steward, or the new one—the fiend Calverley—should forget you; and——"

"Tush, tush!" interrupted the galleyman; "if Stephen Holgrave has forgotten Robin Wells, how should Thomas Calverley remember him?"

"Robin Wells!" repeated Holgrave, with a long inquiring look. "No—you are safe! I hardly think the foul fiend himself would detect you. Now I call you to mind—your eyes and mouth are little Robin's—but the brown skin and the black hair——"

"Aye," said the galleyman, "you marvel what has become of the red and white, and the short, thick, yellow curls. Oh, you landmen know nothing of the wonders that sea-suns and sea-storms can work. To be sure, it never would entirely change yellow into black,—so, when I wanted to turn Genoese, I used a certain drug that made my eyes and hair look as if they belonged to the same master."

"Well," said Holgrave, looking at his guest with that kindly feeling that is ever called forth by unexpectedly beholding an acquaintance of earlier days—"well, how often my poor mother used to talk of you, and wonder how it fared with you. I remember well when you came to bid us good-bye."

"Aye, aye, so do I," said the young man, evidently agitated; "but—let us talk no more of it."

Holgrave, thinking that Wells was averse to being reminded of an un-

pleasant circumstance, spoke no more of the day when the orphan boy had gone forth into a strange world; but, counting upon the sympathy of the galleyman, he began to recount his mother's fate.

"Hold, hold," said Wells, starting up, and covering his eyes with his hands; "as you hope for mercy, say no more — I cannot bear it."

He then sprung up the ladder, and threw himself upon the heap of rushes.

The extreme agitation of Wells, although it surprised Holgrave, by no means displeased him; — be sympathy ever so extravagant, still, generally speaking, it is gratifying; and Holgrave, at that moment, would have laid down his life in defence of the man who could feel so keenly.

Nature had given the galleyman a good and a kind heart, but evil associates had done much, and dissipation still more, to demoralize his soul; yet his natural good qualities were not entirely uprooted: the good fruit would sometimes spring up, but it sprung up only to show what the soil might have produced — it bloomed for an hour in beauty, and then was trodden under foot, and defiled in the dust.

When Wells had sprung into the loft, accusing himself of the part he had taken in Edith's trial, and of the nefarious traffic which had placed him in the power of Black Jack, he vowed that, in future, his dealings should be strictly honest; that he would give a portion of his worldly goods to the poor; offer a certain sum to the Abbot of Gloucester for masses to be said for the soul of Edith, and endeavour to make what atonement he could by befriending Holgrave. But in a few hours his feelings became less acute; and we believe all of his vow that he fulfilled was that of striving to aid Holgrave, and becoming, to a certain degree, honest in his dealings. The next day he began to feel that depression of spirits usually experienced by persons accustomed to stimulants. Several times was he tempted to go out and brave detection, — but a fear lest some of the fair-folks should recognise him, made him pause.

In the afternoon Lucy Hartwell came in to see Margaret, bringing some little gift, and asking how she fared. Wells could distinctly hear all that passed in the room below; and soon collected, from the conversation, that the visiter was the daughter of old Hartwell the ale-seller. He remembered her a pretty little girl when he had left the village — with hazel eyes twinkling and brightening like a star; with a step as light, and a form as delicate and graceful, as the greenwood fairy to whom she used to be likened. Her voice had deepened a little, but it had still much of the sprightly animation of her childhood.

She kissed and admired the infant, inquired of Margaret's health, bade her hope for better days, and then proceeded to talk of affairs at the castle; how the baroness still continued to weep and lament; and how De Boteler, ever since he had returned from London, had been almost distracted — one minute crying and raving that there was some traitor at the castle who had connived at the abduction of his child, and that he would discover him and hang him up without form of trial, — and the next offering large rewards and free pardon to any one who could give the slightest information, even though they should have aided in the theft; — and once he even went so far as to promise pardon to the actual offender. As, of course, this strange occurrence had been a prolific source of speculation to the gossips, Lucy proceeded to detail a number of stories she had heard on the subject.

Although Wells took little interest in these details, yet he loved to listen to the sweet tones of a remembered voice; and, as the evening had begun to close in, and Lucy talked of returning home, he resolved to put faith in the good feelings and discretion of the maiden. In an instant he had leaped down the ladder and stood at her side.

Lucy gave a faint scream, and cast a look of astonishment at Margaret.

"It is only a stranger," said Margaret, answering to Lucy's glance, "whom Stephen has promised to shelter. — You need not fear."

"Fear!" repeated the galleyman, as he gazed on the beautiful features of the abashed Lucy; "what can such an angel have to fear? — and yet, by the saints! such a prize would tempt the honestest captain that ever commanded a vessel. Years have passed away since I last saw you; — you were then but a child. You have forgotten me — but in storm or in sunshine, never have I forgotten you: the first sound of your voice, when I was aloft there, made my heart beat — and I thought I would run all hazards and face you. But — you don't know who is talking to you — Do you?"

"No," replied Lucy, "I do n't think I ever saw you before."

"O yes, but you did; — do n't you remember one Robin Wells, a stout rosy boy with curly hair, that made you a wreath of holly and ivy — one All-hallows day — and put it on your head, and called you a little queen? You were ten years old that day, and it is just ten years and three days since then. Do n't you remember it?"

"Yes," said Lucy, blushing deeply, and half raising her bright eyes to see if she could identify the stranger with the boy who used to pluck fruits and flowers for her, and make garlands for her hair; but the fixed gaze of the galleyman compelled her to withdraw her inquisitive glance, and then there was a moment of silence, during which Lucy's burning cheeks told she was conscious the stranger's eyes were still regarding her. But her embarrassment was far from very painful; — there was something so gratifying, especially to a warm-hearted girl, to be remembered for so many years by one whom she had herself forgotten — for poor Lucy never once suspected the truth of what Wells had asserted!

"You are changed, Lucy;" said the galleyman, in a meditative tone, "and so am I; but a quiet home has reared you into loveliness; while cold, heat, and storms, have made me what I am. It was that ivy wreath of yours that made me a wanderer — I spent a couple of hours gathering and making it, and they promised me a flogging for idling, and so, after putting the crown on your head, I set off, and here I am again after ten years, looking old enough to be your father — but, hark you, maiden — sailors are thirsty souls, and here have I been laid up these two days, without tasting a drop of any thing stronger than — ha! ha! — milk! Your father has plenty of stout ale, and I'm sure such a little angel as you will have the charity to bring a flagon to a poor seaman adrift."

Lucy, glad to escape from the gaze of the galleyman, and also pleased at an opportunity of showing kindness to an old acquaintance instantly arose, promising to return in a few minutes with some ale.

"But, take care," said Margaret, "that you say not whom it is for."

Lucy promised to be circumspect, and in less than ten minutes placed a flagon of her father's best ale before the galleyman, and then bounding away with a light laugh, as Wells sprang forward to pay for it with a kiss, her little form was instantly lost in the darkness of the evening.

About an hour after nightfall the next evening, the galleyman prepared to depart from Holgrave's cottage: repeatedly did he urge his host to accept his offer, and with his wife and the little babe remove for ever from a spot where his proud spirit had suffered such wrong; but Holgrave steadily refused; and the galleyman, having forced Margaret to accept two pieces of gold, went forth from the roof that had sheltered him. Holgrave's dwelling, as the reader already knows, stood upon an eminence apart from the congregated dwellings that were styled the village. The only object Wells could discover as he looked around, was the glimmering of the lights in the adjoining habitations. He remained stationary for an instant, while he looked across in the direction of Hartwell's house, and then, smiling an

imaginary farewell to the pretty Lucy, with a quick step and a light heart he walked away in the opposite direction.

All was silence as the galleyman proceeded ; labour had ceased, the evening repast was made, and many of the inhabitants of the village had already retired to rest. The evening was clear and cold, and the firmament was radiant with stars, the moon being only a few days old. By some strange impulse, the man who had so often gazed upon the far-spread beauty of an ocean sky, stood still for a moment here ; and, by as strange a conceit, the silvery semicircle above, as it seemed, even in the crowd of lesser lights, brought to his mind the ever-smiling beauty of Lucy Hartwell. The wanderer lingered for a space — then hesitated — then turned suddenly — and, in less than five minutes, he had pushed open the hatch of old Hartwell's door and had entered boldly.

There were no guests ; a bright fire was blazing on the hearth, and the galleyman, throwing himself upon a bench in the chimney-corner, requested Hartwell, who was sitting on the opposite bench, to give him a jug of his best ale.

"Here, Lucy," shouted the old man, "bring a jug of the best."

Lucy obeyed the summons with alacrity, but, as she presented the beverage, a slight start and a sudden blush told how much the appearance of Wells surprised her. The galleyman drank off the ale, and then, walking to the farther end of the kitchen, where Lucy stood, "Here, pretty maiden," said he, in his usual loud and joyous tone, "fill it again ;" and, as she turned to the cask to replenish the jug, he added, in a voice that met her ear alone :—

"Lucy, I must speak to you before I go." He took the replenished jug from the little maiden, and then resuming his seat, paid Hartwell for the ale, and began chatting upon the weather and the times ; and, when the old man's attention was thoroughly engaged, Lucy took the opportunity of throwing a large hood over her head and slipping out unperceived by her father. The galleyman took the hint, and draining the jug and starting on his feet, declared he should enter Winchcombe in better spirits after such excellent ale ; and then bidding good evening to the unsuspecting old man, hastened after Lucy.

About thirty paces in the rear of her father's house, was an old far-spreading oak, beneath whose branches stood Lucy, awaiting him, who was even now, in her mind, to all intents and purposes a lover. As the dusty-foot looked around in the darkness, a whispered hint! decided his course, he sprung to the tree, and stooped to clasp the little form in his arms, and to imprint on the glowing cheek his first kiss ; but Lucy drew back, and, with the dignity of a maiden, repelled the freedom.

"Nay," said Wells, "you know I am slipping my cable, and you should n't grudge a parting salute ; but, however, do n't stand aloof—I give you the word of a sailor—I cannot say of an honest one, but that's nothing—one man's word is as good as another's, if he means to keep it, and so I give you my word that I will not offend again, and now give me your hand, and I will trust my secret to a sinless maiden."

"Alas !" said Lucy, "I am not sinless."

"Maybe not so, entirely, yet I am sure you are as sinless as woman can be—but listen to me, Lucy—you know that I am a bondman's son—that I fled from bondage—and that ten years of roving freedom have not made me free. All this you know, but you do not know that I am the Genoese galleyman who cheated the chapman's dame at the fair of Winchcombe."

Lucy started, and made an involuntary effort to withdraw the hand that Wells had taken ; but he held it firmly, while he added,

"I need not have told you this, but I would not deceive you—I have led

a wild sort of a life, and I used to laugh at it; but somehow, since I have beheld the place of my boyhood, I would give back all the lawless freedom of the seas, and all the money-making traffic of the land, to be what I was when I left this spot—but this is all foolish talking; what is past is gone, and cannot be helped.”

“Aye,” interrupted Lucy, “but you can help what is to come.”

“Yes, and so I will; but you know I have neither home nor kin. Now one doesn’t like to stand alone in the world like a deserted wreck in the midst of the ocean—nobody caring a straw whether it sinks or swims. I think I should not have done as I have done if I had thought any heart would have grieved to hear I was not steering right.”

Wells paused a moment, and then added—

“I have seen blue eyes and black eyes—fair skins—and dark skins but I never saw a she of them I cared to look upon the second time; but I could n’t have sheered off this night without a parting look at you, if the whole hue and cry of Winchcombe had stood to meet me. You’ve never been to sea, Lucy, and so you cannot tell how it cheers a man to think of the port his vessel is steering to—to look across the heaving billows, and to see, even in his fancy, the snug harbour where he is, at length, to cast his anchor. Now, maiden,” continued Wells, pressing within his own hard palms the little hand he held, “now tell me, shall not the wandering seaman look across the ocean to a sure anchorage. May he not think of a haven where he may at last moor his tossed-about galley?”

Lucy was little used to the figurative language of a sailor, yet she easily interpreted his meaning; and, after much hesitation, a little blushing, many promises of amendment—and many more protestations of unchanging love, she plighted her troth, and the galleyman departed on his journey.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, any one ignorant of the interest thrown around Holgrave, would have been much surprised at the extraordinary sensation created in the barony of Sudley, by a report which went abroad of the flight of the bondman. The sun had risen pretty high ere any suspicion arose that Holgrave had broken his bonds. On the previous Saturday, Calverley had ordered him to commence his next week’s labour with ploughing a certain field; and about two hours before noon, the steward took occasion to pass the field, in order to ascertain how Holgrave was getting on with his task; but to his surprise, however, the ground presented the same unbroken surface it had worn on the previous week; and after some fruitless inquiries after the contumacious serf, he at length repaired to his hut, which he found secured. The door was then forced with little ceremony, and the hearth was found cold, and the cottage deserted. The bed, the chest, the stools, &c. stood as heretofore; and it was but the business of a moment for the steward to glance around the apartment; to raise the lid of the chest; to spring up into the loft; to descend, and leave the cottage, and close the door as before.

Calverley had no sooner assured himself of the flight of the bondman, than he despatched a messenger to assemble the vassals for the purpose of carrying the hue and cry in different directions; and he then entered the castle to inform De Boteler of the event.

Isabella grew pale as she listened; for by some strange instinct she had so connected Holgrave with the abduction of her child, that his flight seemed now to have wrested from her her last hope.

“Send forth the hue and cry,” said De Boteler. “Scour the country till

the knave be found, and promise a noble to him who discovers the runaway."

"The vassals have been collected, my lord, and John Byles is now sending them off by different routes."

"It is well," replied De Boteler; "but can you learn no certain tidings of his course?" Calverley answered, that the only intelligence he had yet obtained, was, that Holgrave had been seen at dusk on the previous evening, standing at his door, talking to his wife's brother.

"What! the daring monk who thrice entered this castle to insult its lord?"

"Steward," said Isabella, turning quickly to Calverley, "see that the vassals have obeyed your orders. Remember, the varlet *must* be found!" And, as Calverley withdrew, she said to De Boteler with a thrill of apprehension, "Roland, do you not remember the words of the monk when our first darling was lying a corpse? '*The blight has fallen on the blossom—beware of the tree!*'" De Boteler's countenance changed while she spoke, from anger to thoughtfulness.

"It is strange, Isabella, that suspicion never fell upon the monk! He is more artful than the knave Holgrave; and out of revenge for the church being defeated, might have——"

"No, no," interrupted the lady, "it was Holgrave who stole my child, although the monk, perhaps, counselled the deed. At all events, he knows of the bondman's flight."

"Yes, yes, there is little doubt of that: but how can we come at the truth? Sudbury still retains his wrath against us, and would oppose an arrest; and even could he be waylaid, and brought hither, he is stubborn, and might refuse to answer."

"I will write to the abbot," said Isabella.

"Write to Simon Sudbury?"

"Yes, De Boteler," continued the lady, "I will write to him, and try to sooth his humour. You think it a humiliation—I would humble myself to the meanest serf that tills your land, could I learn the fate of my child. The abbot may have power to draw from this monk what he would conceal from us; I will at least make the experiment." The lady then, though much against De Boteler's wish, penned an epistle to the abbot, in which concession and apologies were made, and a strong invitation conveyed, that he would honour Sudley Castle by his presence. The parchment was then folded, and despatched to the abbot.

Calverley, after seeing the last lingering vassal fairly beyond the bounds of Sudley, proceeded himself to search in the immediate vicinity of the castle; but at the close of the day returned without having obtained the slightest clue. The hue and cry was equally unsuccessful; and those engaged in the pursuit also returned, cursing Holgrave and the steward for giving them so much fruitless trouble. The idea now prevalent at the castle was, that Holgrave had concealed himself somewhere in the neighbourhood, till the vigilance of pursuit should relax, when he would attempt to effect his escape. Fresh orders were, therefore, issued, to search every house, free or bond, on the estate. Calverley himself superintended the scrutiny; questioned, menaced, nay, even entreated, but in vain; nobody could tell, except the smith, because nobody knew; and he would have preferred knocking Calverley on the head, and abiding the consequences, to betraying a man whom he had assisted thus effectually to elude detection.

The Lady Isabella's application to the abbot had been attended with as little effect. Sudbury had met with readiness the overtures of reconciliation, and in accordance with her desire, had interrogated the monk; but Father John evaded his questions with a firmness which gave offence to his superior, and convinced De Boteler and his lady, that he knew much more than he chose to reveal. Spies were set about his path, but nothing was

gained—nothing discovered to prove that any communication existed between the fugitive Holgrave and the obdurate ecclesiastic.

It was about a month subsequent to this, that one morning, as Turner was making the anvil ring with the ponderous strokes of his hammer, two retainers from the castle entered the shed, and delivered an order from De Boteler for his immediate attendance. Wat laid the hammer on the anvil, and, passing the back of his right hand across his forehead, to clear away the large drops that stood there, looked with a kind of smile at the men, as he said,

"My lord wants me at the castle, does he?"

"Yes."

"But does my lord remember the last time I was there? He did n't want me *then*—he told me he should n't be counselled by such as *I*. There is no rent due, and I have done no wrong—and there can be no business for me at the castle."

"But, Turner," said the men, "we must not take this answer to the baron."

"Well, then," replied Wat, "tell him that Wat Turner says he has made a vow never to enter the hall of Sudley Castle again; and if you don't take that answer, you get no other."

It was to no purpose that the retainers strove to persuade him to send a reply more respectfully worded. The smith, without heeding them, put the iron that had lost its heat into the embers, and ordered the man at the bellows to blow on: and the messengers, after waiting a few minutes, left the shed without obtaining another syllable. They, however, shortly returned, and with so peremptory a mandate, that the smith, not wishing, from prudential motives, to provoke hostility, threw down his hammer: and first making himself, as he said, a little decent, proceeded with the retainers to Sudley Castle.

Turner thus far complied with the baron's order—but not a foot would he step beyond the court-yard. He had vowed, he said, when Holgrave's freedom had been denied him, never to cross the threshold of the hall again; and without being absolved by a priest, he would not break his vow, even at King Edward's bidding. De Boteler, accustomed to implicit obedience, was much provoked at this obstinacy, and, as was natural, his first orders were to use force; but it instantly occurred, that no force could compel the smith to speak, and it would be to little purpose to have the man before him, if he refused to answer his interrogatories. The compulsory orders were therefore countermanded, and Calverley was desired to try what persuasion might effect; but De Boteler could not have chosen one less likely to influence the smith. The instant that Calverley strove to induce a compliance, Turner might be compared to a man who buttons up his pocket when some unprincipled applicant commences his petition for a loan—for not only was his resolution strengthened not to enter the hall, but he also determined not to answer any question that might be put to him, even should De Boteler condescend, like Edward to Llewellyn, to come over to him. But De Boteler was so incensed that the stubborn artizan should presume to hold out even against solicitation, that, in all probability, he would not have troubled himself farther with one from whom there was so little satisfaction to be expected, had it not been for the remonstrances of the lady, who was instigated by Calverley to have him interrogated respecting Holgrave's flight. In compliance, therefore, with her earnest desire, he condescended so far to humour the smith, as to retire into the adjoining apartment; and as Turner's vow had not extended beyond the hall, he had no longer a pretext for refusing to attend.

The frown was still on the baron's brow when Turner was introduced; but Isabella, veiling her displeasure under a smile of courtesy, said, with gentle condescension,

"It would be well, my good friend, if all men observed their vows as religiously as you do."

She paused. The smith bent his head in silence, and the lady proceeded—

"My lord has heard from the steward that you are an honest tenant, and has directed that any alteration you may require in your tenement shall be attended to, and that the field which lies at the back of your dwelling be added to it without additional rent; and, as it gives me pleasure to encourage the industrious, in any request you may make, my interest shall not be wanting. And now, honest man," added she, with even more suavity, "my lord has a question to ask—it is but a simple inquiry, and I feel assured that a person of such strict probity will not evade it—know you Stephen Holgrave's place of concealment?" As she put the interrogatory, she looked earnestly in the smith's face.

Turner was prepared for direct and haughty questions from the baron; but the covert and gentle manner of the lady rather disconcerted him: however, though he paused with a momentary embarrassment, yet, contrary to Isabella's expectation, he firmly, but with a kind of native propriety, replied—

"Noble lady, I cannot tell you where Stephen Holgrave is concealed."

"It is false, knave!" said De Boteler, who had listened with impatience to the persuasive address of his lady—"it is false! We are positively informed that you aided and abetted the flight of this bondman, and that you alone can give tidings of him."

It was in vain that the baroness cast on him a glance that said he had adopted a wrong course—it was in vain that his own better judgment whispered, that he ought to leave the management of the affair in the hands of her who could smile and sooth, when she had an object to attain, without the least violence to her feelings: his anger was set in motion, and it would have required an influence much stronger than the Lady Isabella's to have calmed its ebullition. Although De Boteler spoke so rudely, yet Turner was pleased that it was *he* whom he had now to contend with; and, looking doggedly at the angry baron, he said,

"My Lord de Boteler, boy or man, Wat Turner was never a knave, and —"

"My good man," said the lady, preventing the interruption she saw De Boteler was about to make—"my good man, my lord was informed that you were privy to the bondman's flight; and if you were so far (as you considered) his friend, I commend your prudent reserve—but I pledge my word that no harm is intended him: and if he clears his conduct to my lord's satisfaction, his condition may be better than it has ever yet been —"

"Isabella, make no promises," interrupted De Boteler—"parley not with such as he." And, striving to calm himself so as to speak dispassionately, he added, turning to the smith, "Walter Turner, you are acquainted with the spot that shelters Stephen Holgrave, and I insist that you instantly reveal it."

"And think you, my lord," said Turner, firmly, "that if Stephen Holgrave had told me of his hiding-place, Wat Turner would be the man to bring him back to his bondage? No, no! I never did any thing yet to be ashamed of."

"Do you know, blacksmith," interrupted the baron, still endeavouring to appear unruffled, "that you are not talking to one of your own class, but to one who has the will—aye, and the power—to compel a satisfactory reply? And I insist," he added, raising his voice, "that you tell me where the bondman abides!"

Isabella saw, by the undaunted look with which the smith regarded De

Boteler, that no good would result from this interview; and as she could not, with propriety, interfere any further, she arose, and left the apartment.

"Do you hear me, varlet?" asked De Boteler, in a furious tone, as the smith delayed an answer.

"Why, my lord," answered Turner, with composure, "I told you before, that if I knew where Holgrave was, I would not tell."

"Then you admit knowing where he is hidden?"

"It matters little, my lord, whether I do or not," replied the smith, in something of a sullen tone; "whatever I know, I shall keep to myself."

"Say you so, knave?" returned the enraged baron; and then, turning to an attendant, he ordered that a few retainers should instantly attend.

During the moments that elapsed between the order and the appearance of the men, De Boteler threw himself back in his chair, and was apparently engaged in counting the number of studs in his glittering sword-hilt; and the smith (who, although he felt himself a freeman, yet, from a natural principle of deference, did not consider he was at liberty to depart until the baron had given him an intimation to that effect) stood, with something of an embarrassed air, awaiting the permission, and the idea every instant crossing his mind whether this summoning of the retainers could have any reference to him. But his suspense was not of long duration — the retainers entered, and De Boteler, raising himself in his chair, said, pointing to Turner,

"Bear that man to the tumbrel — an hour or two there may teach him better manners!"

"Bear me to the tumbrel! ha, ha, ha," exclaimed the smith, with that indescribable kind of laugh, combining derision and defiance.

The retainers approached to execute the order. Turner glanced hastily around, but no weapon, or any portable article that might serve the purpose of one, was at hand: he, therefore, had only to step back a few paces, and to place himself in the best attitude of resistance he could.

"By saint Nicholas!" said he, pushing back the sleeves of his jerkin, and extending his long sinewy arm, "the first man of ye that lays a finger on Wat Turner, had better have shrived himself; for there is that in this hand (clenching his fist in the face of the man who was nearest, and speaking through his set teeth) — there is that in this hand will make ye remember!"

The men paused; — it could scarcely have been through fear, when four or five were opposed to one, even though that one looked at this moment rather formidable; but probably they waited for farther orders, before making the apartment a scene of contention, and, perhaps, of mortal strife.

"Aye," resumed Wat, as he observed the hesitation of the retainers; "stand back, and I'll warrant ye I shall go quicker than the whole tribe of ye could drag me. This is no place for me, where, if a man does n't tell what's in his mind, the halloo is given to the pack to put him in the — tumbrel! ha, ha, ha!" Taking advantage of their indecision, he had walked on to the door of the apartment while speaking, and his bitter derisive laugh was heard as he crossed the threshold.

"Follow him!" said De Boteler, in a voice that was reverberated from the high carved roof, "and place him instantly in the tumbrel, if the whole force of the castle should be employed." But it was easier, however, to command than to enforce; the whole strength of the castle could not attack a single individual; and Wat, on leaving the apartment, had rushed through the doorway that separated the two court-yards, and, seizing a large splinter of wood that lay on the ground, now stood with his back against the wall of the stables.

Those to whom the command was addressed now encompassed the smith,

who, with astonishing dexterity, warded off the blows that were aimed at his hands and arms to compel him to relinquish the stave. His hands were bleeding, and his arms swollen; but his heart was like the roused lion's, and, if unable to conquer his opponents (for the exertion of parrying prevented him from dealing blows), he would undoubtedly have at least tired their mettle, had not a stable boy, who saw the fray from a window above, mischievously flung down a quantity of chaff on his head. In the surprise and annoyance this created, the weapon was wrested from his relaxed grasp, and the retainers fastened on him like wolves. In the manual struggle which now succeeded, Turner was dragged towards the tumbrel; but, as it met his eyes, he seemed suddenly endowed with more than human strength. The retainers fell around him, either from blows or kicks, and blood streamed copiously. At length De Boteler (who would not permit steel to be used against an unarmed man), ashamed that so unequal a conflict should so long continue, ordered that, instead of the tumbrel, Turner should be conveyed to the keep. This, after much resistance, was effected, and a prison-door was, for the first time, locked on the intrepid smith.

The Abbot of Winchcombe had now become a frequent guest at Sudley. The feelings enkindled by the detention of Edith, and the defiance of De Boteler, had passed away and were forgotten. Expiatory presents had been made to the abbey, and a promise given that a gift of land should be added to its already ample endowments. Sudbury, as we have already related, had questioned the monk respecting Holgrave and the child, and, from the evasive replies returned, was strongly inclined to favour the opinion of Isabella, who now, that the application to the smith had failed, became more urgent that some compulsory measure should exact an unequivocal avowal from Father John. The wishes of one so powerfully connected as the wife of the influential De Boteler, were, no doubt, of some weight with the abbot; but these certainly would not have influenced him so far as to induce him to adopt a conduct incompatible with the dignity of his character, had not Father John been known of late to express strange opinions; and the monk, though poor and friendless, was one of those whose opinions somehow (it can scarcely be said why) appeared of consequence. It was true that, although but an illiterate bondman when he gained admission to the cloister, he was now, if not entirely the most learned, undoubtedly the most talented and industrious within its walls: no monk transcribed so much, none was more devout, more strict in discipline, more attentive to the numerous and fatiguing duties of his situation as a secular monk in administering the sacraments, attending the sick, &c. But, though thus exemplary, strange things were said of him. He had been heard to declare, for instance, that villeinage was oppressive, and in every sense unjust; and that every villein was justified, whenever an opportunity offered, in escaping from bondage. These opinions, although not sufficiently heinous to have subjected him to ecclesiastical punishment, were yet considered sinful; — the first as uncharitable, and the second as subversive of good order: and they induced Sudbury to act with more rigour than he would have been inclined to adopt had there been only the vague suspicions of the lady to urge his interference. Father John, therefore, was again questioned, and commanded, by his vow of obedience, to disclose the retreat of Holgrave, and reveal all he knew respecting the lost child; but threats availed not. In the midst of these adjurations, the abbot received a paper from a messenger, who burst breathless into the room, with the intelligence that the Lady Isabella had fallen down in a swoon in her own chamber.

While perusing this document, and more especially an enclosure it contained, he looked first amazed and then enraged, casting ever and anon a look of much meaning upon the monk, who stood cold and calm by his side.

"Read!" thundered the abbot suddenly, as, after a moment's hesitation, he thrust the parchment into the monk's hand. "This paper was found on the dressing-table of the Baroness of Sudley!"

Father John read aloud as follows:—

"Thy child is not dead, but sleepeth. At thy bidding he shall awaken, and make the desolate heart rejoice. Let Roland de Boteler, Baron of Sudley, swear, at the altar of St. Peter's, that, on the day on which his lost child shall be restored, he will release for ever those whom, under the law of villeinage, he can claim as his property. Let him swear this, and, as the Lord liveth, the child shall be restored!"

"Now what think you of this?" demanded the abbot, when he had finished.

"The sentiments," replied Father John, calmly, "resemble, in part, those that I have publicly avowed."

"And this is all!—you refuse explanation! you do not even deny the authorship! Are you not aware, that he who could obtain access to the chamber now must necessarily be considered the robber of the child?"

"And what is that to me?" coldly demanded the monk.

"Hence, sir! away, unworthy son of the church! away for the present—we shall soon find a means of bending your stubborn heart!"

Father John's situation from this period became every day more irksome. He was forbidden to approach the sacraments, and strictly interdicted from administering them. His brethren passed without noticing him, and he was not permitted to eat at the board common to all. A small table was set apart, on which his bowl and platter stood, and hints were given that if his obstinacy continued, he would, ere long, be confined to his cell.

It was reported that the Lady Isabella had been in a state of great excitement from the moment of perusing the parchment—that she had urged De Boteler to make the required vow, alleging that if the contract was not fulfilled, the engagement would, of course, be void—and, it was added, that De Boteler himself had at first appeared disposed to comply; but on farther consideration, had resolved to wait till something further should transpire.

There lived, at this time, at the distance of nearly a mile beyond the town, a man named Giles Gray; and about ten years previous to the time of which we write, there were few round Winchcombe of whom it might with more reason be imagined that his days would pass amidst peace and plenty. Possessed of a farm, which, if not the most extensive in the parish, was well cultivated and fruitful, and sufficiently ample to place him among the class of respectable yeomen; with a little gentle wife, two fine rosy children, and an exuberance of animal spirits, he seemed placed above the chances of fortune. But his wife fell into a consumptive illness, which, rendering her incapable of attending to the domestic affairs, her sister, a pretty, active young woman, kindly left her home, at Campden, to take charge of the family. In less than a twelvemonth the wife died, and Jane, the sister, still continued to superintend, and much was she praised for her management and for the attention she paid the little orphans. However, many months had not elapsed, ere strange whisperings went through the neighbourhood;—groups might be seen conversing earnestly together;—and if it chanced that Gray's sister-in-law passed, every eye was turned up, and every head significantly shook, and Gray was at length compelled, in vindication of Jane, to produce a certificate, setting forth that they were married at St. Crypt's Church, in the city of Gloucester, about six months previously.

But it would have been better for Giles to have left his wife to the mercy of uncharitable whisperers than to have adopted this mode of justification. The first intimation of his indiscretion was signified by an order from the

parish priest instantly to separate, and by public penance to merit absolution from the church. A month was allowed them. The four weeks elapsed, and the incorrigible pair were still living beneath the same roof; and, on the fifth Sunday, at St. Peter's, the parish church of Winchcombe, the congregation were assembled, the tapers lighted, and the missal opened. Some words were then said, acquainting the people of the crime of Giles and Jane, and cautioning them against holding any communication with such obdurate sinners. The bell was next rung—the book closed,—the tapers were extinguished, and the incestuous pair pronounced accursed of God and man. This ceremony was performed thrice; and when the unfortunate Jane was seized with the pangs of child-birth, Gray, after having the doors of fifty houses shut in his face, as he implored assistance for his wife, was compelled to go to Campden, a distance of thirteen miles, to try what the force of nature might effect. There his application was not rejected; the aged mother, although her heart was breaking at the lost and degraded state of her youngest child, yet consented to accompany Gray; and disguising herself, that none might recognise her, hastened to Winchcombe.

Jane had been delivered of a dead child about two hours previous to the arrival of her mother, and lay trembling and exhausted, in a January evening, without light or fire. A fever, with violent periodical shiverings, was the consequence. She slowly recovered; but the two little children, fondling over their sick mother (as they called the unfortunate woman), caught the fever, and in a few days, probably through want of care, expired.

Things had been getting worse and worse ever since. No labourer would work for them—no neighbour would purchase from, or sell them any necessaries, and all the produce of Gray's individual industry was carried to Gloucester; for at the populous market of that city, he sold and bought without it being known that the ban of excommunication cut him off from all social intercourse with his kind.

It would have been still worse if Gray had rented his farm of one whose religious principles were more defined than De Boteler's; but even he, though he would not drive them from the soil, refused to take recompense for the small portion of land that the man himself could attend to, and even this portion, small as it was, presented little of the healthy and cultivated appearance that his broad fields had formerly exhibited. Sickness often came; and there was the enervating consciousness of being a shunned and solitary man. Then, too, there were domestic bitterness and mutual upbraidings and reproaches; and often did the once industrious and light-hearted Giles, instead of saving his hay or cutting down his slender crop, lie the whole day beneath the shadow of a tree, brooding in gloomy discontent over the dark prospect before him.

"Father John, who, for obvious reasons, had not been forbidden to leave the abbey, was, one evening, in the course of a solitary walk, accosted by the wife of this man.

"Holy Father," said she, sinking on her knees before him, and raising up a countenance which exhibited the traces of deep mental suffering: "Holy Father, hear me?" This entire day have I been watching for you. —Oh, do not leave me!" she continued in agony, as the monk, disengaging his habit from her grasp, with a shudder of disgust, would have hurried on. "Oh! do not leave me!" she repeated, clinging to his dress. "Have I not heard, when it was permitted me to enter the house of prayer, that the blessed Lord hath suffered a sinful woman to kneel at his feet and wash them with her tears! Alas! she could not be as sinful as I, but—" she bent down her face upon her hands—

"Unhappy woman!" said the monk, in a tone that seemed to encourage her to proceed—"what would you of me?"

"Oh, father!" said she, raising up her eyes, that were filled with tears; "it is not for myself—it is for *him*."

Again the monk looked stern, and strove to loosen her hold, but she held with too firm a grasp to be shaken off, and the trembling diffidence of her speech changed into the eager and fervent supplication of one who would not be denied.

"Oh, father! he is dying—the death-sweats are upon him! and can I, who brought him into sin, see him die under the curse of God? Oh, mercy, holy father! have pity upon him!—his soul is repentant—indeed it is! We have vowed, if he should recover, to part for ever—oh, come to him!"

"I dare not—let me go! Is he not excommunicated? has he not lived on in sin? Let me go."

"Never! never!" replied the woman, with a convulsive scream. "No one but you dare I ask—and I will not leave my hold, unless you force me! You know not what is in the heart: even in the last hour there may be—there is mercy. Let him not die with the curse upon him—and, by all your hopes in this life, and by the blessedness that will gladden you hereafter, do not deny the last hope of the wretched!" The woman again bent down her head, as if exhausted by the intensity of her feelings.

Father John gazed upon her with a look of compassion; and, though aware of the danger he should incur, he said, after a short struggle,

"I will go. Can we measure the mercy of the Lord?"

"Will you?" said the rejoiced creature, starting on her feet, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven—"may the Lord grant the prayer that you pray!"

It so happened, that no one passed during this interview; and, as the monk followed the rapid steps of the woman, he often looked anxiously around, hoping he might not be observed.

As they entered the dwelling, a child came running forward to meet its mother: Father John shrank from the little one, as if its touch would have been pollution, and approached the sick man. His dim eyes brightened as they fell upon the monk, and he strove to rise in his bed, but sank back on the pillow.

"Do not disturb yourself," said the father, in a soothing tone; and, as the wretched wife left the room, he prepared himself to listen to the dark catalogue of long-growing crime. Father John exhorted and encouraged, and with all the fervour of his soul joined the dying man's prayer for mercy. It seemed as if the spirit had lingered for the parting consolations of religion; for scarcely were the last prayers said, ere a slight tremor was preceptible through the whole frame; the eyes fixed, the jaw fell, and the soul went forth to judgment.

Father John, rejoicing that he had listened to the woman's prayer, knelt a few minutes in earnest supplication for the departed, and then rose; but ere he left the cottage, he gently informed the unfortunate Jane of the event.

It would be a vain task to attempt a description of what followed—of the agony with which she threw herself by the bed, and kissed the cold hand and cold cheek, and upbraided herself as the cause of his sins, and sorrows, and early death; of the desolation that filled her heart as she looked on the dead, and felt that there was no one now, except the little child, with whom she dare claim affinity; of the feeling with which, on the following evening, assisted by a singularly charitable neighbour, she deposited the body of him she had loved in an unhallowed grave, at the bottom of the garden, and went forth in the darkness of that night, with the child in her arms, to seek, as a wandering mendicant, the charity of strangers.

It is said, that charity covers a multitude of sins; but how often does an

uncharitable spirit convert that into sin which may in reality be an act of benevolence ; or, at worst, nothing more than the weakness of humanity ? Father John's attention to the dying man was thus distorted. He was unfortunately perceived parleying with the woman, and followed to Gray's cottage, by a person employed to watch his motions. The information was instantly conveyed to Calverley ; and as Father John left the cottage, he started at beholding two officers from the abbey, standing at a sufficient distance to avoid the contamination of the dwelling, but near enough to prevent the egress of any one without their observation. Concealment was impossible ; so he stepped boldly forward, and with the brothers one on each side, proceeded in silence to the abbey, where he was instantly conducted to his cell, and the door closed and bolted upon him.

His heart swelled for an instant as the brothers retired ; but the indignant flash presently passed from his eyes, and he rejoiced that no selfish consideration had prevented him from, as far as in him lay, saving the guilty soul of the deceased.

The next morning the monk was summoned before the abbot ; and with the same calm and dignified demeanour that generally characterized him, he obeyed the summons. The two brethren who had conducted him from Gray's cottage, stood at the table, and the abbot proceeded to say, that upon the oath of a respectable witness, he had been observed conversing with an excommunicated woman, and accompanying her to her house, and that those two brethren (pointing to the officers) were ready to avow they had beheld him leave it. "Now," continued Sudbury, "what have you to say ? Did you converse with the woman ?"

"My lord," replied the monk, "I listened to her earnest prayers."

"Did you accompany her home ?"

"I did, my lord."

"For what purpose ?"

"To calm the last moments of a sinner."

"Did you not know that his crime had shut him out from the aid of religion ?"

"Yes, my lord ; but I was assured, that if he survived, their sinful intercourse would cease, and that by public penance they would strive to obtain forgiveness."

"Have you never heard of the fallacy of death-bed promises ?" The monk was silent.

"Did you administer the sacrament of penance to the incestuous wretch ?"

"I did, my lord," returned the monk firmly.

"A most obedient son of the church, truly," said the abbot, (the calmness with which he had before spoken, changing into a quicker and harsher tone.) You have read that obedience is better than sacrifice ; and yet, though suspended from the exercise of the priestly functions, you have presumed of your own will to absolve a sinner, who, setting at naught the voice of the church, has lived in sin — a scandal to his neighbours, and a dreadful example of hardness of heart."

"My lord, I was unwilling that a soul should be lost —"

"Rebellious son ! Do you dare to justify your conduct ? But this comes of admitting base blood to the privileges of the gentle. What better could be expected of a man who held your principles ? Now hear me ! You have sinned against the authority of the holy church, and violated your vow of obedience. You have also exhibited a most contumacious spirit in refusing to recant those pernicious opinions you professed, and to answer the questions I before put to you. Retire now to your cell, and there remain solitary for eight days, that grace may have power to operate on your soul ; and then, if you still remain incorrigible, you shall be degraded from your

order. Retire," he added, waving his hand, and pointing to the officers to lead him away.

Father John raised his eyes as Sudbury repeated the threat of degradation. He had expected censure; but he was not prepared for this extremity of punishment; and the wounded feelings of a high spirit spoke in the silent glance he cast upon the abbot, as he turned proudly away, and followed his conductors to the cell.

In eight days he was again brought before Sudbury; but solitude had effected no change in his sentiments. Three days more were granted, and on the fourth, all the members of the community were assembled, and the monk was led from his cell to the chapel. There, in the presence of the brethren, he was once more asked whether he would publicly confess his fault in administering a sacrament to an excommunicated man, and profess his desire to perform public penance for the scandal he had given; and when he made no reply, he was asked if he would disclose the place of concealment of the bondman Holgrave. To this, also, no reply was given; and finally he was promised, that if he knew aught of the stolen child of the Lord de Boteler, and would unreservedly declare all he knew — if he had not actually assisted in the abduction — all his past errors should be forgiven, in consideration of this act of justice. But Father John knew, that although by a disclosure he might avert his own fate, yet he would assuredly draw down inevitable ruin on Holgrave, and that the hopes he had himself cherished — for the reader cannot be ignorant that it was he who was the author of the mysterious document — would utterly fall to the ground; and with that noble-mindedness, that would rather sacrifice self than betray the confidence of another, he still refused to answer.

Sudbury scarcely expected such firmness; and there was a minute or two of breathless excitement and profound silence through the chapel, as the abbot ordered two brothers to approach the obdurate monk, and strip off the habit he had rendered himself unworthy longer to wear.

Father John's lips grew pale and quivered; and there was a slight tremor perceptible through his whole frame, as the monks reluctantly proceeded to obey the command of their superior. His eyes were fixed upon the ground; he dared not raise them, for the chequers of the pavement seemed indistinct and trembling; and yet for twelve days he had been preparing himself to meet this catastrophe with firmness. The outer garments were removed; their place was supplied by a coarse woollen jerkin and cloak, and then the monk, for a moment resuming the energy that was more natural to his character than the subdued spirit he had as yet evinced, stood forth from the brothers who had been the unwilling instruments in the act of degradation, and fixing his eyes upon the abbot, who stood upon the topmost step of the altar, with his face turned towards the brotherhood, said in a tone that filled the whole chapel — "My lord abbot, I shall appeal against this severity. It is not because I administered a sacrament to a sinner that I am thus degraded — it is because the Lord de Boteler desires to humble me — because he foolishly imagines, that a spirit conscious of its own strength would bend beneath injustice and oppression, that I am thus dealt with. But remember, my lord, that 'with what measure you mete to others, the same shall be meted to you again.'" So saying, without waiting for the ceremony of being driven from the gates, he turned and with a quick step left the abbey.

But here his firmness again forsook him; he had stepped from his home — from the quiet seclusion that was endeared to him by years of residence and holy recollections, into a strange world, to struggle and contend — to sin, and be sinned against; and he leaned against the abbey wall with such a feeling of desolation as a child may be supposed to feel, as he bends over the grave of his last surviving parent. A few bitter drops of wounded

pride, and deep regret, forced their way down his cheeks, and it was not until he became conscious that a group of persons of different ages and sexes were silently and sympathizingly gazing upon him, that it occurred to him he ought to remove to a less conspicuous situation.

CHAPTER III.

DE BOTELER and his lady had left Sudley to be present at some festival in London, the day previous to that on which Father John was degraded; but, from the firmness he had hitherto shown, the result was anticipated, and Calverley had received orders to arrest the monk on his being dismissed the abbey, and to confine him in the castle, until the baron's return.

The degraded priest proceeded slowly amidst the sympathizing crowd that attended his steps. Several times he stopped, with the intention of requesting the people to return home and leave him to pursue his journey as he might, but he could not collect that firmness of demeanour which had been wont to distinguish him; and ashamed further to betray his weakness, he each time passed on without uttering a word. They had cleared the town, and were crossing the bridge on the left, over the Isborne, when Calverley, and about half-a-dozen retainers well mounted, darted from the bridge into the high road. Four of the men, springing from their horses, surrounded the monk, and were about placing him on the back of one of the steeds, when the faculties, which had been for the moment chained by astonishment and indignation, burst forth with unexpected energy, and, with a form expanded to its full height, and an eye flashing fire, he shook off their rude grasp, and stepping back, demanded by what authority he was thus molested.

"By the authority of the Baron de Boteler," replied Calverley, as the monk fixed his eyes sternly upon him.

"It is false!" he replied, "no human law have I violated, and to no man's capricious tyranny will I submit."

"It becomes the bondman to speak thus of his lord," said Calverley with a sneer.

"I am not a bondman — nor is the Baron de Boteler my lord," said Father John, in a deep, collected voice.

"O, I crave your pardon, good father," returned Calverley, smiling; "I mistook you for one John Ball, the son of a bondman of this barony."

"My name is John Ball, and I have been the son of a bondman, insulting craven," replied the father, indignantly; — "but I owe the Baron de Boteler no allegiance — you well know that the priest can be servant to none save he who created the bond and the free."

"And this is the habit of some new order, that is to be honoured by being adopted by the unpriestly son of a bondman!" said Calverley, pointing, in derision, at the coarse woollen dress of the monk. Something burst from the lips of the latter, but it was lost in Calverley's sudden command to seize him. The men again approached, but the first who caught the monk's arm fell to the ground, stunned and bleeding.

Another succeeded, and met the same fate — then another, and another; — but at length, overpowered by numbers, the gallant priest was bound, and placed before one of the retainers on horseback.

There was now a simultaneous rush made to the bridge by the crowd, who stood watching the horsemen till they entered the castle; when they formed into groups, wondering at what they had just beheld — at what might be the fate of the monk, and at their own supineness in suffering

half-a-dozen men, even though armed and mounted, to carry him off without a blow.

That evening, Wat Turner, who had been liberated from the keep, after a short confinement, was leaning on his folded arms, which rested for support on the sill of the aperture in his shed, that served the purpose of a window. The forge fire had died away; the servitor and the journeyman had been dismissed; but Wat still lingered, as if he could there indulge his reflections more freely than in his own house. His eyes were bent on the ground, and so far was he lost in some waking dream, that, until his name was repeated in rather a loud tone, he was not conscious of any one's approach.

"Ah, Tom Merritt!" said the smith, raising his head and recognising in the dusk a stout active young man, a mason, who resided at Winchcombe.

"Have you heard the news, Wat?" asked the mason.

"No—I have enough to think of, without troubling my head about news!"

"Aye, aye, true—but did n't you hear of Father John?"

"Yes, I heard they dealt badly enough with him, because he would not betray poor Stephen—and for giving the sacrament to that unfortunate scape-grace. They told me he was to be turned from the abbey to-day, so I sent Dick with a few groats to help him on a little—but I don't know yet, whether the lad is come back, for I have not seen him."

"O, he is among the group that stands looking at the castle walls, I dare say," said Merritt. "Did you not hear he was thrown into prison?"

"What! my Dick," asked the smith, eagerly, starting up from his posture at the window, and his listless countenance suddenly becoming animated.

"No, no, not the boy," replied Merritt, rather impatiently.

"Oh," said the smith, again sinking upon the window frame; and then, as if perfectly comprehending what had been said, he added, as a bitter smile passed across his lips, "In prison did you say? What had he done that he should be caged? Refused to say where Stephen is hid?"

"Maybe so; but I can only tell you this—that when the poor monk was turned out of the abbey, Calverley seized upon him like a dog, or a thief."

"Calverley, the fiend!" interrupted the smith, fiercely. "If I could only give that beggar's vagabond a sample of what this hand could do, I think I should take a good night's rest—and that's what I have not done since the night they gave me a lodging in the castle dungeon; and you say that Calverley has put him in prison? Now, I tell you what, Tom Merritt," continued Turner, "if there be a drop of man's blood in your body, they shan't keep him there."

"Will you help?" asked the young mason, eagerly.

"Will I help, man! Aye, that I will, with a good stomach—Why, if they shut up a dog that I cared for within those four stone walls, I would help him out!—But that monk is a holy man—and they think to frighten him as they thought to frighten me. Tom," added Turner, leaning through the aperture, and laying his hand upon the young man's shoulder, "I have never held up my head like a man since that night. To be set upon like a fox! To be dragged and hauled, and thrown into a prison—Tom! (grasping the arm of the other with a force that made him shrink) when I think of this in the day when I am at work, I throw down the hammer, for my blood boils, and I could not strike a sure blow for hours after, if a king's ransom was offered me. But, by St. Nicholas! 't is little work that Wat Turner has done ever since—all has gone wrong—but I shall soon leave the parish altogether—and then, maybe, things will go on better. For

here, if a man looks at me, it seems as if he would say, 'Turner, you have been in jail!' Tom Merritt, never boast or brag of anything!"

"Indeed, master Turner, I have as little as any man to brag of; for — if — it had n't been for the watching and the advice of poor Father John, my old mother might have been this day hanging her head with shame, instead of looking up as bold as any of them, and saying, 'my son,' or 'my Tom,' as well as the best."

"That's all very well; but, Tom, as I just said, never boast. I used to brag that there never was a woman dishonest, nor a man a rogue, in my family; and that none of the name of Turner ever had a key turned upon him. And you see what it's come to."

"Aye, aye, master Turner," replied Merritt (impatient of a long speech, yet knowing the smith's irascible temper too well to interrupt him), "I do n't know what will come next! Here were you, who paid scot and lot, and cared for no one — see how you were treated! And now here is the holy father (with whom, though he got into disgrace at the abbey, one would have thought, for the sake of their own souls, they would n't meddle), dragged off like a common thief; and if we do not go to the rescue, the saints preserve us! who can tell if he will ever come out again? for there is none but poor Stephen akin to him."

"Enough! Tom Merritt, this is no place for an honest man. I was to have gone in a few days, but when this night's job is done, I shall just pack up all I can get together into a cart, and let the black fiend, or his imp Calverley, take the rest. Aye! with my wife, the boy, and Will, I shall be out of Gloucester before sunrise — and the sooner the better. But now let us talk of the rescue. How many honest hands can you get among the town's folks?"

"Why," replied Merritt, every mother's soul who could grasp an axe; but I have seen a dozen lads who have sworn to free Father John, or lose their lives. And knowing that you would give a helping hand, I told them so, though without your leave. We have provided paint for our faces. The retainers in the castle are few; and while myself and the men keep guard over them, you, as a smith, know best how to manage the lock of the keep."

"Give me your hand, for a brave fellow," answered Turner, grasping cordially the conceded member. "There are yet a few bold spirits in this manor. I shall seek them, and I'll warrant they will not leave Wat Turner in the lurch for this bout at least. And as for the lock, the foul fiend himself could not scheme or forge a spring that could keep me out for five minutes. Have your friends together in the field at the back of the town. The nights are dark now; and when I hear the clock strike eight, I shall be with you with all the hands I can gather."

Merritt presently departed; and at eight the two confederates again met. Soon a compact and resolute body of more than twenty men slowly and cautiously proceeded to the castle, and, in double file, ensconced themselves close to the walls, and so contiguous to the gate of usual egress as to be ready to rush in at the first opening. They had stood thus, scarcely drawing breath, for about half an hour; and Merritt, who, with the smith, was at the head of the little band, was about to propose that they should attempt to force an entrance, when the gate opened, and John Byles, who had been engaged upon some business with Calverley, unsuspectingly issued forth.

The smith caught him in his iron grasp ere he closed the gate, and, placing his broad hand over his mouth, held him till a bandage could be properly fastened; then flinging him on the ground, secured his hand and feet, bound him to a tree a few steps distant, and, with the two men who had assisted, rushed after Merritt and the others, who were by this time in the court-yard.

No sound escaped them, and it was only the quick footsteps on the pavement that attracted attention. But ere the alarm was given, the intruders had reached the keep. The smith, with astonishing celerity, picked the huge lock of the lower dungeon, in which, by virtue of former experience, he imagined the father was confined; and beheld, by a torch, which they had now lighted, what fired even the most sluggish soul among them. The monk lay stretched on the ground, nearly divested of covering, with his arms and legs drawn by cords attached to iron rings in the four corners of the cell, and with iron weights pressing upon his chest.

"By St. Nicholas!" said the smith, as he stooped to remove the pressure, while the tears started to his eyes, "this is too bad. 'Tis enough to make a heathen sick to see a Christian man served in this manner. Here, Father John, (assisting him to rise,) take my jerkin, and wrap this about you, (snatching a cloak from the shoulders of one of the men.) And now, good father, tell me who did this?"

But the exhausting punishment he had endured for above four hours, together with the cold that penetrated his whole frame, from lying so long exposed on the damp earth, so much impeded his speech, that he could not utter an intelligible word.

"And thus they could serve the Lord's anointed!" said Turner, compassionately, as he looked on the livid and swollen face and trembling limbs of him, whom he had ever, till now, seen with the beauty of holiness giving dignity to his fine countenance, and with the vigour of manhood exhibited in every motion of his muscular form. "Hark!" added the smith, starting—"there is a scuffle outside! Tom Merritt will have enough of them." For an instant he paused, and then, snatching up one of the cords that had tied the monk, he severed it with his axe from the ring in the wall, and passing one end round the monk's arms, fastened the other round his own waist. "Now you will have no trouble in holding by me—keep close. Here, father, could you not hold this? it might keep off some scurvy knave," drawing a sharp wood-knife from his belt, and placing it in the monk's tremulous hand. Turner then ordering the few who were with him to cover the retreat, to keep compact as they followed, and to strike at all within reach, with a keen-edged battle-axe in his right hand, and a formidable club, pointed with steel and firmly bound with iron, in his left, he hurried from the dungeon.

Turner had not been above five minutes in releasing the monk; but, when he came to the entrance of the keep, Merritt and the remainder of the band were sharply engaged with the domestics and the few tenants who kept guard about the castle. The smith pushed on with the monk; passed Merritt and the others, who closed in his rear; and, with that boldness, which often effects what more prudent courage would fail to accomplish, rushed into the midst of the assailants, brandishing his weapons, and shouting defiance at the top of his stentorian lungs.

"Stand aside, ye graceless carles! Shame to ye, cursed cravens, to serve a Christian priest like an infidel! Stand back, or by St. Nicholas! you will never die on your beds!" dealing sturdy blows as he spoke, and pressing forward to a postern beside the principal gate, which was not many paces from the keep.

"'Tis the smith!—'tis Wat Turner," shouted a dozen voices.

"Aye, it is Wat Turner," swinging round his club, and levelling a couple of those who were nearest; "and tell the doomed Calverley, if ever Wat Turner sets eyes upon him, we shall not part so easily as I now do from you!"

The weapons wielded by the powerful arm of the smith were not such as those who had little interest in the detention of the monk would care to encounter. The attacks of the castle people relaxed, the energy of the

rescuers increased; the smith, with the skill of a practised workman, loosed the fastenings of the postern gate, and the band, rushing through and forcibly closing it after them, Father John was again a free man.

"Now, lads, to your homes," cried Turner, as they hurried on, "every man of ye. Go by different roads, and you will not be suspected. There is not a man they can swear to but myself. Now, brave hearts, farewell! We may not meet together again: but all the harm I wish ye is, that Calverley and I may soon meet; and if ever he plagues free man or bond among ye after that, say Wat Turner is a coward—Away! Tom Merritt," said he, drawing the mason aside, "do you think of leaving Winchcombe?—you know there are always busy tongues."

"Thank ye, master Turner, but I think I shall wait and see how matters go."

"As you like, Tom—only mind they do n't coop you up. To my mind, there is not a man in the parish safe;—but things will not always go on so. Now, good father, we must be gone."

Merritt bent his knee to the monk, who pronounced a tremulous, but fervent benediction, on the brave fellow, who, bidding a friendly farewell to Turner, and being assured that Father John should remain under his protection as long as he desired, bounded, with the spring of a deer, in the direction of his home.

On the fifteenth of July, 1377, about six months after Father John was liberated by the sturdy smith, the city of London was arrayed with a costliness, and adorned throughout with a radiance in which it was befitting it should appear on the day when the royal diadem was to be placed on the brow of a young and blooming sovereign. Father John was literally borne along in the current that streamed from the adjacent villages to witness the reception of the young king as he passed over the city-bridge from his palace at Sheen.

The day was favourable for the pageant, and the houses seemed to vie with each other in the variety of their silken colours and tinselled ornaments, glowing and glittering in the morning sun. At Cornhill, indeed, the meretricious adornments of art were superseded for a brief space by the simple beauty of nature, and the eye felt a momentary relief in resting on the green grass, and the few shaded trees that covered the open ground. But this green spot was succeeded by a dense mass of dwellings covered with hangings of a richness suitable to the reputed wealth of the city merchants; here the scene was animated in the extreme,—the motions of the crowd became unsteady and irregular, as they were actuated at once by eagerness to hurry on, and a desire to linger among the rainbow diversity of hues around them, and the glowing beauty, which, arrayed with costly elegance, and smiling with anticipated enjoyment, graced every open window.

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed a solitary wanderer among the multitude, as he turned away sorrowfully from the gaudy display, "alas, for this great city, which was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearl—for in one hour will she be made desolate: and, instead of a stomacher, have only a girding of sack-cloth, and burning instead of beauty." But he had hardly repeated these words, ere a full stream of music, swelling in the air, overpowered the hum that arose from the multitude, and John Ball—for it was the degraded priest who had spoken—imagining this to be a prelude to the appearance of the young king, mounted upon a door-step, and, from this slight elevation, and favoured by his stature, he obtained a full view of the procession, which almost immediately passed.

First came the band of musicians, mounted on gayly caparisoned horses, and clad in jacks of crimson-damasked satin, laced round with gold; the arms of the city richly emblazoned on the back and front, and the white

velvet sleeves of their jerkins so closely laced and interlaced with gold, as almost to conceal the material on which it was wrought. Then two heralds in white-damasked velvet tabards, worked with gold in a variety of fanciful patterns, and with the city arms also emblazoned on the back. Then the sword-bearer of the chief magistrate, in a suit of polished scale armour, and on a steed accoutred in all the panoply of war. Then the lord mayor himself, in a flowing mantle of rich crimson velvet trimmed with ermine, and with a collar of fine gold adorned with gems, and mounted on a stately horse, whose velvet housing, fringed with gold, almost touched the ground. Two pages suitably attired walked on either side. Next appeared the two sheriffs in their scarlet mantles and gold chains. Then rode the four-and-twenty alderman, two abreast, in loose gowns or robes of damasked velvet or brocaded silk; and finally, the members of the common council closed the train.

"And is this the apparel and the bravery of merchants?" said the wandering monk within himself, as the splendid cavalcade passed by; "surely the pomp of royalty cannot surpass this." And John Ball did not draw a wrong conclusion — for when, in about half an hour, the citizens repassed, escorting their youthful sovereign, although there certainly was more cost and elegance, there was less of gorgeous display in the royal than in the civic train.

Richard, then a well-grown boy of eleven, with a countenance the early bloom of which was brightened by an eye of singular intelligence, sat with the ease of a practised rider on a beautiful white palfrey. A cap of purple velvet, trimmed with vair, shaded his fair open forehead and thick bright curls, and a purple mantle, lined and edged with the same costly fur, and confined at the throat with a jewelled clasp, fell back from his shoulders over the housings of the animal. His tunic was of damasked satin, of a bright pink colour, and round the waist was a purple belt, on which a variety of fanciful devices were wrought with pearls. The housings of the palfrey were of velvet, as soft and rich as the royal mantle, and of a similar hue, but enlivened with a profusion of goldsmiths' work, and bordered round with a heavy gold fringe.

Richard looked upon the pomp and circumstance around him with all the pleasure and vanity of a boy, turning every moment with some laughing sally addressed to his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, who rode by his side, or, more frequently, to the young Earl of Arundel, the newly-installed marshal of England. These were followed by Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who had so recently resigned the office of lord marshal, Sir John Burleigh, lord chamberlain, the Earls of Oxford, Kent, Buckingham, &c.

The procession moved on, and the monk followed amidst the mass; but if he looked wistfully at the pageant, it was only in the hope that some opportunity might offer of publicly addressing the young king, or, rather his uncle, and appealing for justice; but no opportunity did offer. Indeed, at such a moment, when the good citizens were displaying their taste and munificence, it seemed little less than folly to expect it.

Next to the considerate hospitality (if it may be so termed) of allowing the water-conduit in Cheapside to spout wine, nothing elicited more unqualified approbation from the lower classes than a temporary building erected at the extremity of the before-mentioned place. This building, coloured so as to give an idea of firmly-cemented stone, presented the appearance of a castle with four circular towers and a spacious gateway midway between. The arch stretched across nearly the whole extent of the horse-road, so that the towers terminating the four angles of the gateway stood parallel with the verge of the footpath. In each of the towers, at about five feet from the ground, was an arched doorway, in which stood a young maiden about sixteen, attired in a white flowing robe, with a chaplet

of white roses encircling her hair, and holding a gold cup in her right hand, and a crystal vase in her left. On the castellated summit of the arch, which was about four feet in depth, and just in the centre between the towers, was placed a figure of equal height with the maidens, apparently of gold, representing an angel holding a beautifully wrought crown in its right hand, which, as the procession approached, the angel bent down, and presented to the young king. At the same instant, the two maidens, in the two towers at the east side, filled their cups with wine from a crystal fountain at their right hand, and each, with a graceful smile, proffered the draught to Richard. They then took, from the vase on their left, a handful of golden leaves, which they wafted towards the young king, and concluded by showering a number of counterfeit gold florences on his head.

Richard, after tasting of the cups, presented the first to his uncle, and the other to Arundel; and then each noble, as he passed, took the replenished cup from the hands of the Hebes, and drank health and prosperity to the youthful sovereign.

The monk mingled with the multitude, and saw the merry citizens escort their sovereign to Temple-bar; and then the royal train proceeded, with somewhat less applause than had as yet attended their route. Indeed, after passing the few houses in the suburbs, the solitary dwellings of the nobles stood along the Strand, few and far between — those on the left with their spacious gardens sloping to the river, and the three or four on the right occupying a space as extended as the wall which enclosed the capacious garden attached to the convent of the abbot of Westminster would permit. So large, indeed, was this garden, as to cover the whole space between the gardens of the Strand houses and the site of what is now Long-acre, and eastward and westward the space between Saint Martin's and Drury-lane. When they had passed the pretty village of Charing, with its cross, the procession turned to the left, leaving behind an ample extent of open country, intersected by the Oxford and Reading roads on the west, and bounded on the north by the bold and picturesque range of the Hampstead and Highgate hills.

John Ball pressed on with the multitude; but the immediate proximity of the palace, where all was splendour and motion, was not to the liking of one who till that day had never even dreamed of such things as had now met his sight. His nerves were weak, and he felt irritated at the insolence with which the royal guards, and the pages of the nobles, drove back the populace. His body, too, was weak, and he felt exhausted with his long and fatiguing walk: slowly and sadly he at length retraced his steps to his humble dwelling in the Minories.

The next morning he repaired again to Westminster. The hall of the palace was open for all who chose to enter, and in the midst, elevated on three circular marble steps, was a hollow marble pillar, surmounted by a large gilt eagle, from beneath whose talons flowed wine into four marble basins, of which all who entered were permitted to drink at pleasure. But the monk was no wine drinker; and with the feelings of one unaccustomed to behold extravagance, he turned away from the pillar with an inward reproach to the donor, for not applying the money to a better purpose. He left the hall, and seeing that a path was formed from the gate of the palace to the north-west entrance of the abbey, by a slightly elevated platform, covered with fine crimson cloth of tapestry, he naturally concluded that the king would pass that way to hear mass, and accordingly took his stand as near as possible to the platform. Inexperienced as the monk was in the etiquette of courts, he augured ill for his suit when he saw the royal retainers, with all the insolence of office, range themselves along the platform, and the nobles and their pages, and the officers of the royal household in their splendid dresses, issue from the palace. But when he beheld the young

king himself, with Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, on his right hand, and the Bishop of London on his left, he started back with an exclamation of surprise (for wrapt up in himself, and heedless of the passing gossip of the day, he had not heard of Sudbury's elevation;) and forcing a passage through the assembled crowd, hopeless and despondent, he pursued his journey eastward.

On the sixth morning from the coronation, Richard, satisfied with shows and revelry, left Westminster, and retired with his mother, the fair Joan of Kent, to Kensington, to rest, as it were, his young head upon the maternal bosom. But even here the officious loyalty of his good subjects intruded; for a gorgeous mummerly was to be played that night by a hundred and thirty of the wealthiest citizens of London.

A little after night-fall, the beautiful widow of the Black Prince sat in the oriel window of the hall, alternately looking with a mother's eyes upon her son, who was sporting with some of the young nobles, and then again turning to the window to listen for the approach of the citizens. She wore a small conical cap of gold tissue, terminated by a narrow band of purple velvet, closely studded with diamonds, beneath which her hair, soft and glossy as in her girlhood, was parted on her forehead, and fell back on her shoulders in rather a waving mass than distinct curls. Her dress was composed of a petticoat and boddice of saffron-coloured damasked satin, with long hanging sleeves. The boddice sat close to the bust, and was confined up the front by twelve gold studs. A girdle of purple and gold, fastened by a buckle radiant with gems, encircled her waist; and the full long-trained petticoat, beneath which the sharp points of the poleyn, or gold-embroidered shoe, was just visible, was clasped in the front at equal distances by two rose-jewels. A mantle of purple velvet, confined on each shoulder by a diamond brooch, fell in rich folds at her back.

While she was listening and wondering at the lateness of the hour, the hall door was suddenly thrown open, and a blaze of light, and a strain of melody, burst simultaneously upon her senses. A dozen minstrels gayly attired, with timbrels, cornets, sackbuts, and other instruments, preceded by as many youths, carrying large wax tapers or torchlights, formed into a double rank in the hall; in the middle of which passed the city pageant. The lord mayor was at its head, habited as an emperor, in a tunic of cloth of gold, tastefully embroidered with black eagles, and the sleeves, which hung full, confined at the wrist and just below the elbow, by bands of black velvet, on which eagles were represented by small pearls. A mantle of black velvet lined with minever, or powdered ermine, floated from his shoulder. On his right hand was a citizen attired as the pope. Then followed the twenty-four aldermen in the dress of cardinals; then forty-eight in the gowns of say and red cloaks of esquires; — others in the purple robe, lined with fur, peculiar to the knight: while some, still more ambitious, wore the emblazoned surcoat of a baron.

The lord mayor approached the table at which Richard had seated himself, and presenting a box of dice, challenged the young monarch to play. At the same instant, one esquire placed on the table a bowl of gold, another a box containing jewels, and a third a golden cup, as pledges for the civic gambler. Richard accepted the challenge, and of course was permitted to win; and Father John, who stood among the group looking on, seized the favourable moment of royal exultation to prefer his suit. He stepped forward, and kneeling before the young king, to the surprise of all, and to the particular annoyance of the ostentatious citizens, exclaimed —

"Thou art set over the people, and to the Lord's anointed I come to seek for justice."

"Who are you, bold man?" inquired the Duke of Lancaster, impatiently, "who thus break in upon his grace's sport?"

"I am one," replied the monk, rising, and turning calmly to Lancaster, "whom injustice has thus forced ——"

"Hah!" interrupted Sudbury, advancing, and who had hitherto sat apart looking on at the mummerly; "is it thou who presumest to approach the presence? Please your grace, and you, noble duke," looking first at Richard and then addressing Lancaster, "he is a monk of our late abbey at Winchcombe, whom, for certain acts of rebellion to our authority, we expelled."

"Why, monk," asked Richard quickly, "why dost thou appeal to us?"

"Pardon me, my liege," interposed Sudbury, "but it becomes not your grace to parley with a degraded monk — a bondman's son! one who would fain excite a spirit of insubordination among the class from which he sprung — who would sow the seeds of disobedience and disorder, and inculcate the absurd doctrine that *all* should be free!"

"Does he indeed hold such opinions, my Lord of Canterbury?" asked Lancaster.

"He does, my lord, and that was one of the causes of his suspension."

"Indeed!" said Lancaster; "next then, I suppose, we shall have the villains of the soil dictating to their lords, when they hear that a base-born priest has had the audacity to enter the royal presence! Ho! attendants! Away with this serf-sprung shaveling! who holds that all should be free!"

"Triumph not, John of Lancaster, for I say unto you, *all* SHALL be free! You, and it may be that the proudest of you all, may yet quail before the base-born!" and the monk fixed a glance first upon the duke, and then upon Sudbury. The archbishop turned away, while Lancaster, laughing scornfully at the threat, commanded the royal attendants instantly to eject him: and, amidst the jeers of the nobles and citizens, the monk was, without farther parley, hurried away from the hall.

It was something more than a year from the flight of Holgrave, when business called Calverley to Gloucester; and, on passing along Silver Girdle-street, his eye encountered Black Jack, whom he had not before seen since Edith's trial. The foreman accosted him after his usual manner, and whispered that he had something of moment to communicate, if he would accompany him to the Mitre. After some hesitation, Calverley consented, more especially as Black Jack hinted something about news of Holgrave; and, when seated in the room, in which their former interview had taken place, Oakley inquired if the Lord de Boteler, some twelve months ago, did not offer a reward for the apprehension of a certain bondman named ——

"Stephen Holgrave!" eagerly interrupted Calverley. "Have you heard or seen anything of him?"

"By the green wax! steward, one would think the man was your property, you seem so anxious — but now tell me has any thing been ever heard of him?"

"No, not a syllable;" replied Calverley in almost a fever of excitement, "but be quick, and say what you know."

"Not so fast, Master Calverley. Did you ever send in the direction of Dean Forest?"

"Yes, yes, many times," answered the impatient steward; "and we offered a large reward to any one who would give information of his retreat?"

"A very pretty method, truly! You know not the miners and forgers of Dean Forest! — why I would stake a noble to a silver penny, that if you

had discovered he was hidden there, and legally demanded him, he would be popped down in a bucket, to the bottom of some mine, where even the art of Master Calverley could not have dragged him to the light of day until the Forest was clear of the pack : — but, however, to speak to the point," perceiving that the steward's patience was well nigh exhausted — "I saw Stephen Holgrave yesterday, in the Forest."

"And did you not arrest him?"

"No, no, steward — Black Jack is not so sick of his life as to throw himself into a furnace. There were not less than one hundred smiths and miners about him; and wo be to the man who should stir their ire."

"I shall back to Sudley," cried the steward, hastily, "and my lord will reclaim him."

"But, steward, surely it is more than a year and a day since I heard the shouting of the hue and cry; and you know the Forest of Dean is privileged. I'll warrant he knows too much of the bondage of Sudley to venture beyond its precincts."

Calverley did not reply to the interrogatory or allusion, but persisted in saying that the baron would claim the bondman, and that the ranger of the Forest durst not dispute the demand: and, besides, should it be necessary, a royal mandate could be procured.

Black Jack was for an instant vexed, that Calverley did not require his assistance; but, shrewdly guessing that the steward wished to have as little to do with him as possible, and also conscious how small chance there was of succeeding by the direct mode, he laughed within himself at the probability that, after failing to accomplish the object he seemed so much to desire, Calverley would, ultimately, be compelled to apply to him. Indeed, had not the steward's mind been so entirely engrossed by the thoughts of Holgrave, he could not have failed to remark how quickly the foreman, from offering the strongest objections to the plan he proposed adopting, agreed with him that it was the wisest and best.

"But, Master Calverley," said Black Jack, as the former abruptly rose to depart, "is my intelligence worth nothing, setting aside the actual loss I have sustained by sitting for four hours spending my money in this room, when I ought to have been fishing about for jobs?"

"O yes, I had forgotten," (drawing out his purse, and presenting a mark to the foreman;) — "I could not expect you could have troubled yourself in this affair without payment; — are you satisfied?"

"Yes, yes," he replied grumblingly, as he pocketed the coin, "Black Jack is easily satisfied."

"And so is the cormorant," muttered Calverley, as he closed the door after him, and hastened to remount his horse.

Supper was served up in the hall ere Calverley had returned to the castle, and he paused a few moments to consider whether he should immediately impart what he had heard, or defer the communication until the banquet were ended; but this hesitation did not arise from any delicacy he felt in disturbing the social enjoyment of the hour, but guests had arrived that morning, and Calverley, ever since the loss of his ear, had been very reluctant to appear before strangers. But the recollection of his mutilation, thus forced upon his mind, instantly decided him. The delay of a single hour might enable Holgrave to leave the forest; for who could say that it was his intention to make the place a permanent residence? He, therefore, instantly changed his riding dress for one more adapted for the occasion, and placing a black velvet cap on his head (for we have before observed it was his peculiar privilege to remain always covered), without a moment's delay he proceeded to the hall, and entering it through the upper door, stood at a little distance behind De Boteler's chair, awaiting until the baron's eye should fall upon him. De Boteler presently turning to give

some order to a page, Calverley took the opportunity to approach, and, bowing, said softly, "My lord, I have heard tidings of Stephen Holgrave."

De Boteler's colour deepened as he made some hasty exclamation in reply, but the duties of hospitality were paramount at that moment, and shortly saying he would attend to him another time, Calverley retired.

Isabella's quick eye had observed the action of Calverley and the momentary embarrassment of De Boteler; and as the idea of her lost child was connected with every thing strange or doubtful that she saw, her mind was instantly filled with a thousand surmises. — Had any trace of Holgrave been discovered? Had the obstinate monk made any disclosure that Calverley, by some fortunate chance, might have become acquainted with? These, and a variety of other conjectures, possessing less colour of reason, so much engrossed her thoughts, that she could scarcely command her feelings sufficiently to pay that graceful and courteous attention to her guests, for which she was in general so much distinguished. No opportunity, however, offered of satisfying her curiosity until the guests had retired for the night; and then, upon entering the ante-room of her chamber, De Boteler was sitting listening to the steward's statement.

"Isabella," said the baron, as she entered, "Calverley has ascertained the retreat of Stephen Holgrave." She had anticipated something of the kind; but the effect it produced was singular. An electrical thrill seemed to vibrate through her frame, and a sudden coldness chilled her brow; but ere it could have been said that her cheek was pale, the whole countenance was suffused with a deepened glow, and rallying her energies, she asked, with assumed composure, "where he was hidden?"

"In the Forest of Dean," replied De Boteler; "and Calverley has every reason to suppose he has been concealed there since he left Sudley."

"Did not the hue and cry pass through the forest?"

"Yes, Isabella; but, by my faith, it seems they are such sturdy knaves in that forest, that even the promise of reward has no effect upon them."

"Then they must be compelled to surrender the bondman. — Calverley," continued the lady, turning to the steward, "can you rely on your information?"

Calverley replied in the affirmative: and then, on a motion from Isabella, withdrew.

"My lord, you will give proper instructions," resumed Isabella, in a tone that seemed to imply she expected the most rigorous measures to be adopted.

"I am afraid, Isabella," replied De Boteler, "that the knave has escaped us. Dean Forest is a royal demesne, and a bondman, remaining unclaimed, in such a place, for a year and a day, can claim the privilege of a king's vassal."

"Roland de Boteler, do you intend to submit? — but you have not a mother's feelings!"

"There can be no reasons for the suspicions you still entertain," replied the baron, with more seriousness than he had spoken before. "The knave has been punished enough. There was no great matter of crime after all in burning the house — it was his own — aye, as much as this castle is mine. And do you think that any chance would ever make me consider that another had a better right to this building than I? — If I could have got hold of him at the time I would — but now, let it pass — an obstinate spirit like his is better away. You see what we obtained by imprisoning the monk — the whole barony up in arms in a rescue! and the bravest retainer in my castle killed by the club of the audacious smith! But that shall not pass so easily — for, by my faith, if I light upon that meddling varlet ten years hence, he shall hang as high as gibbet can raise him. I

repeat," continued he, in a determined tone, "that I will not interfere," and, rising hastily, as if he meant to escape from the argument, he left the room.

There might be one reason found for the more merciful feelings De Boteler evinced on this occasion, when it is said that he was on the eve of departing for London to join the Duke of Gloucester, who was preparing to make an incursion into France. The idea, no doubt, of again treading the French soil, recalled to his mind the service which the fugitive Holgrave had performed. The baroness, however, did not appear to heed the decisive tone of her lord; for, with the wilfulness of her sex, she determined that his departure should be the signal for commencing operations.

Immediately upon De Boteler's departure, which occurred in a few days, measures were taken to procure a royal grant of the villein to his late lord; and upon the instant of its being obtained, Calverley, attended by about a score of retainers, left the castle, without the slightest apprehension for his personal safety, or the most distant fear that his application would fail.

On arrival, his errand was made known to Neville, the deputy constable of St. Briavel's, who readily attended him with his men. As they rode towards the foundry, which had been indicated as the place of Holgrave's employment, a suppressed murmur from the trees by the road side attracted the constable's attention, and it was said by those nearest, that he gave a significant smile as he passed. The party dismounted at the foundry, and on entering, Holgrave was observed standing close to the forge, surrounded by about a dozen smiths. Neville smiled as he addressed Holgrave.

"I am commanded," said he, "by King Edward, to deliver you to the Lord de Boteler's steward. Here is the royal mandate;" and he drew from his pocket a parchment bearing the privy signature.

"And here," said Calverley, unfolding the royal grant, "is the deed that transfers the king's villein to his late and rightful lord."

"Master Neville," said Holgrave, "can the king's grant make a freeman a slave? or can the king's order give you authority to molest a man who has committed no crime? I owe no fealty to King Edward, except as a freeman, and as you yourself are bound to do. I stand here as free as any man of you, and no one shall compel me to become a slave. — But it is to you, foul murderer!" glancing fiercely on Calverley, who shrank from his gaze — "it is to you I owe this! Were my poor mother's death, my own ruin, and the loss of my farm and my home, not enough, that you continue to hunt me down like a wild beast?"

"Honest man," said Neville, mildly, "you are described in the king's writ as a bondman of his grace; and two men have this day deposed that you acknowledged yourself as Lord de Boteler's villein, and swore fealty to him in his own court."

"They lie, Master Neville! Bring them here, and I will maintain, in combat against them both, that they have sworn falsely."

"It was not to parley you came here, Sir Constable," said Calverley, "but to fulfil the king's command. This bondman, you must have been aware beforehand, would attempt to deny his bondage, like any other of his class who break their bonds."

"The king's order shall be obeyed to the letter, sir," replied Neville, as he looked somewhat contemptuously at Calverley, from whom he did not expect so abrupt an address; and then, gently taking the unresisting hand of Holgrave, placed it in that of the steward. A shout of pain from Calverley declared the cordiality of the gripe with which he was favoured by his enemy, and he withdrew his crushed fingers, amidst the cheers and shouts of the spectators."

"Now, steward," resumed the constable, "Mark Neville has performed

the king's commands as a loyal subject, and it remains with you to do the rest."

"And do you not intend to give me safe conduct through the forest, Master Neville?" asked Calverley, with some alarm — "this is a part of your duty. You are bound to convey this bondman to the verge of the forest, and you are also bound to prevent any inhabitant of it from abetting his cause."

"Read this warrant," replied Neville: "is there a syllable there of safe conduct? I am ordered to deliver up the man — I have done so; and now I wish you good even, and a pleasant ride back."

A loud laugh from the smiths followed this speech; and Calverley, now overcome by personal apprehensions, caught the constable's arm as he was passing through the doorway, and inquired, if he really imagined he was complying with the royal mandate by such a mockery.

"It is no mockery, steward — I have done my duty; and if you cannot do yours, is it my fault?" And then, shaking off Calverley's grasp, he mounted his horse, and with his attendants, amidst deafening cheers, took the road to the castle.

Calverley's eyes turned in the direction of the shout, and a mass of living beings, variously armed, were seen swarming from the adjacent wood, and rushing on to the foundry. He remembered that he had not more than twenty to oppose to this multitude; and his heart died within him as he saw the glowing cheek and derisive smile of Holgrave, and thought that now was the moment for his revenge. In an instant, not only was the foundry filled with men, but the window and doorway were darkened with their black heads without.

Calverley was now forced to assume a courage which he did not feel; and looking sternly around, he asked, in as firm a voice as he could command, why he was thus surrounded? or whether they intended to make him a prisoner?

"No, steward," said the spokesman of the smiths, "you are no prisoner — you are at liberty to go as soon as you like; and I would advise you, as a friend, to go quickly, for we men of the forest are not like your Sudley folk." Calverley, in some measure reassured by the unexpected mildness of this reply, quickly said,

"I have no wish to remain longer — give me free passage with this bondman, and I shall instantly depart."

"Bondman!" exclaimed Holgrave, raising his clenched hand, but he did not strike — "lying craven!"

"I tell you, steward," said the smith who had before spoken, and stepping so near Calverley that he involuntarily drew back, "if you prize your life, you will call no man here a bondman. I am free — that man is free —" pointing to Holgrave, "and we are all free — all sworn brothers; and no one shall dare," raising his voice, "to brand, with such a name, a mother's son among us! You have received fair warning, and leave to go: retire now — instantly, if you are wise! Clear a passage there for my Lord de Boteler's steward! There is now room for you to pass — your retainers are waiting without — and now take the man you call a bondman, and away with you all. What! you will not lay hold of him? Take him, I say!" elevating his voice — "seize the villain, and drag him back to his bondage! What! not a finger, after all the trouble you have taken? — then, away with you alone! — away!" And Calverley, from the mere instinct of obedience to a superior power, moved towards the door. "And if ever," continued the smith, "you are found hunting in this forest again for bondmen, as you call them, we may chance to give you a lodging where you will have little reason to complain that the sun shines too brightly!"

Calverley made no reply; but, without looking either at Holgrave or the

man who had so fiercely and tauntingly addressed him, took the advantage offered — passed through the door of the foundry, and through the yielding ranks of sneerers and jibers outside; and mounting his horse, galloped rapidly away from the scene of his defeat, with the shout of a hue and cry following his track as far as the foresters considered their legitimate domain.

CHAPTER IV.

THE tenth evening after this exploit closed in heavily, and the wind blew chill and gusty, loaded with drizzling rain. Oakley felt little inconvenience from the night, as, wrapped in a large cloak, and with an unusually broad-brimmed hat, he cautiously approached the low-roofed dwelling of Holgrave, in the forest of Dean. He had little difficulty in distinguishing it, Harvey having a few days previously, though without the least intimation of the reason, watched Holgrave from the foundry to his home. The blaze of a bright wood fire was streaming through the casement. Black Jack stepped near enough to obtain a view of the interior, in order to assure himself that he was not mistaken, although, from the description he had received, he had little doubt; and a single glance convinced him it was the dwelling he sought. Holgrave was lying along a bench in the opposite chimney corner, his right elbow resting on the form, and his right cheek reposing on the upraised palm. He was looking with a smile at Margaret, who was sitting with her back to the window, and, by the motion of her right hand, was apparently engaged in sewing. The gazer conjectured that Holgrave had been asking her to sing, for, as he stood, she commenced a strain of such sweet and touching melody, that even Oakley (who, spite of his being so admirably "fit for treason," had "music in his soul") listened with such breathless attention that one would have been tempted to conclude he might "be trusted." The ballad concluded, and Oakley still looked on, until Holgrave, after a few moments of apparently cheerful conversation, arose from the bench, in all probability with the intention of preparing for rest.

Oakley stepped back from the window, and stood an instant apparently irresolute. "Plague on this Holgrave!" he muttered — "I wish I had sent Harvey; he could have managed it as well as I; but one do n't like giving these fellows half the profit, besides making them as wise as one's self; — but what is the knave to me?" And then, as if his slight scruples were dissipated by the consideration of the little sympathy that ought to exist between one circumstanced like Holgrave and himself, he drew his hat more over his brow, and folding his cloak closer around him, approached, although, it must be admitted, with rather an indecisive step, the door of the cottage, and gave a slight tap. "I will go to the door, Stephen," he heard Margaret say, with a quickness which seemed to imply that the simple circumstance of a summons to the door at a somewhat late hour was sufficient to awaken her fears.

No reply was given, but the door was instantly unclosed by Holgrave. Black Jack stood in the shade, just beyond the light that streamed from within, but so close that Holgrave, without crossing the threshold, merely leaned his head forward, and heard him say, "Stephen Holgrave, do you remember the cross-roads and Hailes church-yard?"

Holgrave started. "Hailes church-yard!" he repeated, bending nearer to the speaker.

"Aye; and do you remember what you promised the men in the vizors,

when the craven fled, leaving his ear where perhaps his carcass may not find a resting place, and when the abbey folk were rushing on with torch and cudgel?"

"Yes," replied Holgrave, in a voice which told that the abrupt questions had called up all the painful events of that night—"yes, I remember well, I said that if any of those who helped me then ever wanted a friend, they were not to forget Stephen Holgrave."

"You did; and do you not recognise me, as he who gave the alarm when the fellows had peeped above the wall at the cross-roads, and whose hat was pierced by an arrow as he stood beneath the tree that overshadowed the grave at Hailes?"

"Yes, yes," said Holgrave, grasping his hand, "I remember all"—convinced, not by the voice, for on both occasions the voice had been disguised, but by the presumptive proofs.

"Stephen Holgrave," continued the foreman, still speaking in a low tone, but slowly and distinctly, "you can now return the service of that night. I want your aid immediately;—it is not in a matter that will hazard your life. I have given a promise, and you are the only man that can aid me to keep it. Will you assist me?"

"I will," replied Holgrave, firmly—"Do you want me now?"

"Yes, instantly. You shall know the business in less than half an hour."

"Stop one moment," returned Holgrave, and stepping into the cottage, he took a warm frieze cloak from a peg in the wall, and throwing it over his shoulders, was reaching for a kind of short-handled spear that lay on a shelf above the fireplace, when Margaret, clasping his left hand, looked up in his face, and asked with a pale and trembling lip, "Stephen, where are you going? Who is that man?"

"Do not be alarmed, Margaret. I must go with the man who spoke to me, but I shall not be long."

"Go with him! Who is he? His purpose cannot be an honest one, or he would not conceal himself. Who is he, Stephen?" she repeated in a loud voice, and clinging more closely to the hand he was striving to disengage.

"He is an honest man, Margaret," replied Holgrave, snatching away his hand, vexed that one who had befriended him should hear his wife's suspicions. But, as he fastened his cloak, he added, in a more soothing tone, "Do not fear. It is one of those who helped to give my poor mother a Christian's grave, and he wants me to do some little turn for him now."

"Are you sure, Stephen?—are you quite sure it is the same man?"

"Yes, yes, Margaret, quite sure," replied Holgrave in a tone that told her all farther remonstrances would be useless. "Did I not return safe from Gloucester?" asked he, lingering an instant, as he saw her heart was sinking with dread.

"But you did not go there in the dark night, and with only one man; and even then, where would you have been now only for our good friends in the forest. Oh, Stephen!" she continued, starting up and throwing her arms round his neck, as she imagined she saw something of irresolution in his countenance,—"do not go this night."

"I must go," he said, as he disengaged himself, and, without venturing another look or word, rushed from the cottage, and joined Black Jack.

They walked on rapidly through the forest, but neither spoke. Black Jack, hardened as he was, was not altogether at ease in thus betraying a confiding man; and this feeling was not lessened by the suspicions Margaret had expressed, and he endeavoured to deceive even himself into a belief that he should have been better pleased if the yeoman had taken his wife's advice. However, he resolved, as he hurried on, that he would be

well paid for so troublesome an affair. Holgrave was not more composed. In despite of what he considered his better judgment, he could not help being, in some measure, imbued with the fears of his wife; and, as he followed his silent conductor, a thousand indistinct apprehensions floated in his mind.

Their route was a lonely one. Scarcely a light was visible in the numerous dwellings they passed, and they reached the verge of the forest without encountering a single human being. They now walked along the high road, which, with a tract of unenclosed pasture land stretching to the right, and a scanty neglected hedge skirting the left, had a wild and dreary aspect, which however might, perhaps, with more justice be attributed to the darkness and gloom of the night, than to anything particularly cheerless in the road itself. They had proceeded about a dozen paces beyond a narrow lane, turning to the left, when Oakley, without assigning a reason, stepped back; and, as Holgrave turned to inquire the cause, he saw some men close behind him; and ere, in the surprise of the moment, he could raise his weapon to defend himself in case of need, a blow from a club felled him to the ground. The blow did not deprive him of consciousness, and now, convinced of treachery, he sprang on his feet determined not to yield with life. But it was not possible for one arm, even though that arm was nerved by an indomitable soul, to hold out long in so unequal a strife. It was in vain that he strove to attack or grapple with one—a host appeared to encompass him. Incessant blows from staves and clubs, although more annoying than really dangerous, wearied him out, and one, descending on his already swollen right hand, finally decided the contest. The arm dropped, and the weapon, that had as yet, in some measure, protected him, was easily wrested from his relaxed grasp; and the impotent fury of an almost frantic resistance availed but for a short space. He was gagged, bound hand and foot, and thrown into a cart that drew up for the purpose from the adjacent lane.

Black Jack and his retainers accompanied the vehicle on foot, none choosing to trust himself with one, who, though now to all appearance firmly secured, had shown such an untractable spirit, and in this manner proceeded, without interruption, to Sudley.

On the second morning after Holgrave's capture, the baroness, upon Calverley's entering the room in which she sat, inquired if he had seen the wife of Holgrave? "I hear," continued she, without noticing the surprise which the question created, "that she is in the court-yard, and has had the insolence to ask one of the varlets if she might speak with me! Go, Calverley, and desire her to leave the castle instantly."

Calverley withdrew and repeated the order to a domestic.

"No," said Margaret, as the command was delivered, "I shall not leave this court-yard, except by force, till I have seen my husband. Surely the favour that is granted to the wife of a common drawlatch, will not be denied to me!"

The steward, although vexed at what he considered her obstinacy, yet delayed to enforce her removal until he had tried what his personal remonstrance might effect;—but no man approaches a woman, whom he has once, to the fullest extent of the word, loved, with that calm and business-like feeling with which he can discourse with another. The colour deepened, too, on Margaret's cheek, as she saw him advance, and when, in an authoritative, though somewhat embarrassed tone, he asked why she had not obeyed the order that had been given, she raised her eyes, flashing with a spirit that perhaps had never before animated them, and replied—

"Thomas Calverley, I told him who delivered the message, that I would not quit the castle till I had seen Stephen; and I tell you now, that I shall not go till I know what you have done with him."

"Nothing has been done to him but what he merited," answered Calverley, haughtily, surprised at her firmness, and by a singular feeling annoyed that solicitude for her husband should have called forth such an unusual demonstration.

Margaret felt the falsehood of his reply, but she had not the spirit or language of Edith to reprove it.

"Then you must choose to submit voluntarily to my lady's wishes," he added.

"I do not," returned Margaret; "I shall sit here till the Lady de Boteler thinks better of what she has said, and suffers me to see my husband." Calverley turned away with a frown, but, ere he had retired a dozen steps, he turned again. "Margaret," said he, as he approached, "you are only harming yourself by this obstinacy. The baroness will not grant you permission to visit the dungeon, and, if you persist, there are servitors enough about to compel obedience. But if you go now, I promise to obtain what you ask. Rather than the kernes should lay a rude hand upon you—I would—gratify even *him*. Come at six," he added, as he turned abruptly away, forgetful, at this moment, of all the evil of which he had been the author, and only remembering, with hate and bitterness, that Holgrave possessed the love which had been denied to him.

He had spoken with an earnestness that induced Margaret to believe him sincere. At all events there seemed no better alternative than to trust him; so she rose and retired from the court-yard. Punctually at six she appeared again at the castle, and the confidence with which she crossed over to the keep, showed the reliance she had placed on Calverley's word. The keeper had received the order to admit her, and she ascended the spiral steps and entered the prison that had been previously occupied by Edith. As Holgrave raised his head when the door opened, Margaret saw that his face was swollen and livid, and, when he kissed her cheek as she threw herself upon his neck, his lips were parched and burning.

"Do not look on me so wildly, Margaret," said he; "these bruises are nothing. Aye, even that," as she was examining, with the apprehensions of a tender wife, the black and almost shapeless appearance of his right hand and arm; "even that would be as well as ever in less than a month—but it is their triumph and their treachery I feel: it is this that gnaws my very soul—and all because I thought myself too wise to take a woman's counsel,—and in the very prison, too, where they thrust my poor mother! I have not tasted meat or drink since I entered. There stand the water and the bread—though the burning in my throat almost drives me mad: not a drop will I taste, though the leech told me to drink as much as I could—nor a morsel will I eat."

"No, not of theirs," eagerly interrupted Margaret, drawing a bottle from beneath her cloak, and pouring into a wooden cup, which she took from her pocket, some diluted wine; "but drink this, Stephen: do drink it—it will cool your mouth."

"No, Margaret, I have sworn!" and no persuasion could induce him to alter his purpose.

"Steward," said the Lady Isabella on the following morning, "Holgrave rejects his food—I fear I must release him!"

"Pardon me, lady, it is only a stratagem to get free."

"Do you think so, Calverley?—but the varlet has the obstinate spirit of his mother—and you know I do not desire his death!"

"Holgrave," resumed the steward, with an incredulous smile, "has no intention of shortening his life:" and then he strove, with all his eloquence, to persuade her it was a mere feint.

"However," returned Isabella, "I will send the leech to him."

The leech was sent, and reported that the prisoner was in a state of extreme exhaustion, arising, it would seem, from inanition, as there was no evidence of bodily illness sufficient to have reduced him to so low a state.

Calverley's specious arguments availed no longer, and, muttering curses upon the jailer, whose officiousness had prevented the possibility of that consummation he so devoutly wished, he received the command to set Holgrave at liberty.

That evening Calverley summoned every bondman of the barony to assemble in the hall. Innumerable were the conjectures respecting this summons as the villeins hastened to obey the call; and, when all were collected, a strong sensation of sympathy was excited when they beheld Stephen Holgrave led into the midst; his countenance still discoloured, and so pale and attenuated, that it was difficult to recognise the hale, robust yeoman of former days, in the subdued and exhausted bondman who now took his stand among his fellows.

When all were assembled, Calverley stated that Stephen Holgrave having refused to swear that he would not again take advantage of his liberty to flee from bondage, the baroness, not wishing, from a feeling of clemency, to punish his obstinacy farther, had desired him to declare that she should hold each bondman responsible for the appearance of Holgrave, and should consider their moveables and crops forfeited in the event of his absconding.

A murmur ran through the hall as the steward spoke; and Holgrave, exerting a momentary energy, stepped forward, and, looking scornfully at his enemy —

"Lead me back to prison!" said he; "no man shall be answerable for me."

But Calverley, without appearing to heed his address, resumed —

"You are all now publicly warned; and it will behoove you, at your peril, to look to that bondman!" and then, without deigning farther parley, he left the hall.

There was much discontent among the bondmen as they withdrew from the castle, conversing on the arbitrary decision just pronounced, and on the probability that, before the expiration of three months, that decision would be enforced in consequence of Holgrave's flight; for they could not conceive the idea of the self-sacrifice of a generous spirit, which would rather endure, than that the oppressed should suffer farther oppression. Certainly, according to the letter of the law of villeinage, the bondmen of Sudley had no just cause for discontent; but then, because it was unusual, at least on that manor, to exercise the prerogative to its fullest extent, they almost forgot that this threatened appropriation of their effects was nothing more than the assertion of a right. But there was one novel feature in the announcement of which they had some colour for complaining; — their being considered responsible for one of their own class. However, as in all similar cases where power gives the law to weakness, though there might be a little useless murmuring, there was no alternative but to submit.

Holgrave, as his offer to continue a prisoner was not accepted, left Sudley among the bondmen, and walked slowly towards his old abode. Margaret had returned, and had been suffered to take possession of the dwelling that had remained unoccupied during their absence — which had stood just as she had left it on the night of her departure; and Holgrave, with all the bitterness and gloom of the past, and with considerably more of physical weakness than he had ever experienced, threw himself again into his mother's chair in the chimney-corner, and silently partook of the refreshment that the rejoicing Margaret set before him.

CHAPTER V.

WE have as yet confined our observations to the bondmen ; but in 1381, an act of ill-judged policy of the nine nobles and prelates who formed the council of young Richard gave rise to a sort of coalition among the lower classes. This act was the famous tax of three groats upon every individual who had attained the age of fifteen. The hearth-money, which had been enforced by the Black Prince upon the inhabitants of Guienne, and which had probably formed the precedent for this tax, had not worked well, and there appeared little chance that the present exaction, framed as it was by those who directed the royal councils, would work better. Certain wealthy individuals contracted with the government for the collection of the tax, and private rapacity thus rendered the imposition more obnoxious than it otherwise might have been.

It was on the evening of a feast day, and the day labourers and villeins around Saint Alban's were enjoying the repose that, even in that period of bondage, was never infringed upon, and which, from the frequent recurrence of the festivals, afforded a sufficient relaxation from manual exertion to recruit their strength ; when suddenly, amidst a group in the market-place, who were discoursing upon the severity of the poll tax, then collecting, appeared John Ball.

"Men and brethren, are ye bond or free?" he abruptly asked, in a deep, solemn voice.

"It matters little, good father," replied a gloomy looking peasant, as he started from the earth where he had been reclining ; "the freeman has little to boast of now beyond the villein."

"The freeman shall be righted, and the bondman freed — and then will the mission that has made John Ball for thrice twelve months a homeless wanderer, never resting under the same roof a second night — then will that mission be accomplished — and even if he lay his head upon the block, he will have executed the task allotted to him — will have finished the work he was inspired to begin!"

"The bondman may be freed," replied the man who had before spoken ; "but when shall the freeman be righted? I took little heed of these things when I heard you preach freedom to the villeins two years ago: but my children have been sick ; my wife has been struck with the palsy ; and I, who had not a penny to call my own, gave eleven groats yesterday for myself, my wife, and the two boys ; and to-morrow must I sell the last blanket that covers her, to pay the twelfth."

The man turned away as he spoke, and John Ball, whose mission was rather to the serf than the freeman, commenced an harangue to the gathering crowd. His figure, as we have before observed, was imposing ; and as his eyes, flashing with an enthusiasm perhaps too ardent to be compatible with sound reason, fell on the numbers who now encompassed him, he looked like one fitted to become the apostle of those who had none to help them.

"The dew of heaven is not for you," he began ; "nor is the fat of the land your portion : but I am sent to pour a stream of light into the dark chambers — even to enlighten the soul of the weary bondman. I will sing to them of fearful heart, Be strong and fear not ; for the high ones of authority shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall lick the dust like serpents. The proud lords among us buy up the dastard hirelings with gold and silver, and they clothe them in their livery ! They wear the badge of cruelty and oppression in their hats ; but we shall tread them down like the mire in

the streets. Our king, too, is in bondage, and heareth not the groans of them that are in fetters! — for he is encompassed by the cold and the cruel — but the cold and the cruel shall be swept away. As the gathering of locusts shall we run upon them. Tithes shall cease; — the bondman shall be enfranchised; and the lands apportioned at an easy rent. The proud and rich prelates shall give up their wealth to the sick and the poor, and we will have no clergy henceforth but the order of mendicant priests to administer the sacraments." Thus, and with much more of the doctrine of general enfranchisement and equalization of property, harangued the monk; and we need scarcely add, that his words were listened to with breathless eagerness. In fact, so much was he regarded as a prophet, that more than one life had been sacrificed since the commencement of his wanderings, in resisting his capture by the civil authorities.

It was about a fortnight subsequent to this harangue at St. Alban's, that John Ball, who had passed on through London, preaching and gaining proselytes in his journey, inhaled, once again, the air of his native valley. His heart bounded, and then sank coldly in his breast, as, on ascending a hill, Winchcombe, with its church, its habitations, and the abbey, that had once been his home, burst upon his sight. It was rather singular, that though the enfranchisement of the bondmen of Sudley had been his darling wish, nay, that even the thought of personal freedom beyond that barony had never crossed his mind until the night of his rude expulsion from Kennington, those very villeins should be the last into whose sluggish veins he should strive to infuse a portion of the warmth that inflamed his own. And yet it was not that the enfranchisement of Sudley was less dear to his heart than it had been; but it was because that little spot of earth was dear to him, that he shrunk from visiting it. He had been there respected and beloved; there, too, had he been degraded and insulted; and that degradation, and that insult, had not been wiped away; and he cared not to appear before his own people thus morally cast down. But the hour had now come. Leicester, the dyer of Norwich, had been appointed king of the commons of Norfolk. Other leaders, too, had been named; and his own native barony must not slumber inert while the rest were running the race.

The shadows of evening were deepening, and the monk still stood gazing upon the town, and living over again the past, when a female with an infant in her arms, and leading a child by the hand, passed by. But she again turned to look upon him, first timidly, then more confidently, till, snatching her hand from the slight grasp of the child, she sprung towards him, and sinking at his feet, caught his right hand in both hers, and pressed it to her bosom.

"My sister!" said the monk, bending over her, and blessing her; and after a moment, during which he calmed the agitation of his feelings, he added — "How has it fared with you? Where is Stephen?"

But Margaret was many minutes ere she could do more than kiss his hand, and wet it with her tears. At length, when her emotions of joy and surprise had in some degree subsided, she replied, that Holgrave was still living a villein at Sudley.

"What!" exclaimed the monk — "the smith was indeed told that treachery had betrayed him into the baron's power; but is he chained to the spot — that for three long years he should bear the oppressor's rod?"

"No," replied Margaret; "he would have found some means of getting to the west; but they hold the villeins bound for him — if he flies, all they possess of crops or cattle will be seized. But here is Stephen. I was just going over the hill to meet him, when I saw you."

Holgrave approached, and was scarcely less surprised than Margaret

had been ; and when he spoke of the report current, that it was the monk who had gone about striving to burst the chains of bondage, John Ball replied —

“Listen to me, Stephen Holgrave! I went in before the great ones of the land ; before him who is appointed ruler of the people, to demand justice ; and because I was of the blood of the bond, my prayer was rejected ! — because I was born in bondage I was unworthy of the privilege of the free. The finger pointed, the lip scorned, and the tongue derided ; and I was driven, amidst the jeers of the scoffer, from the palace of the king. But as I went forth, the spirit came upon me, and I vowed that I would not give rest to my feet until the bondman’s fetters should be broken ! And they shall be broken ! A spirit has been roused that they reck not of — a spirit that will neither slumber nor sleep until he, whose first breath was drawn beneath the thatch of the villain-but, shall be as free to come and to go as he whose first pillow was of the cygnet’s down ! — and no man shall say to him, What dost thou ?”

But it was not merely Holgrave that the monk was now addressing ; two or three passers-by had been attracted. The monk was recognised, and these were commissioned to whisper secretly in the bondmen’s ear, that he who had baptized their children, and breathed the prayer of faith over their sick beds, and who had wandered through the land, gladdening with the bright promises of hope the soul of the weary and the oppressed, had come once more among them to speak of personal enfranchisement, and of rent, instead of the accustomed service for the land they might hold. Father John then withdrew with Holgrave by a private path, to avoid any farther interruption.

At an early hour the next morning, it was intimated to Calverley that the barony was all in motion — that the bondmen, and, indeed, all of the labouring class, were gathering, and whispering to each other, and evincing any thing but a disposition to commence their customary toil. These things certainly gave evidence of some extraordinary sensation ; and Calverley’s first inquiry was, “Had any one seen the prophet ?” — for such was the appellation by which John Ball was distinguished. No positive information could be obtained ; the fact could be merely inferred, and the steward, who was not one to hesitate when an idea struck him, ordering a few retainers to attend him, proceeded to Holgrave’s abode. But Holgrave was absent from home ; there was no trace of the monk ; and Calverley, knowing that it would be to little purpose to question Margaret, bethought him that the inquisitive Mary Byles might probably be the most proper person to apply to. From those who had crossed his path, he had merely been able to extract a sullen negative : but so well had the secret been kept, that the steward’s interrogatory was the first intimation she had received of the probability of John Ball’s being in the neighbourhood. However, Mary volunteered, provided Calverley would remain a few minutes, to collect some information. Presently, she returned — John Ball was indeed at Sudley ! She had herself seen him come out of a cottage ; she had beheld him harangue some bondmen who were awaiting his appearance, and after many impassioned words, he had gone on publicly through Winchcombe, with the blessings of the enthusiastic peasantry accompanying him. Calverley started at this information.

“Did you see Holgrave ?” he asked, eagerly.

“Yes,” replied Mary ; “he was by the monk when he stood at the door of the villain’s hut, and I dare say he is with him now.”

Calverley paused an instant. De Boteler and the baroness were in London — De Boteler, assisting in the councils of Richard, and Isabella, by reason of a vow, that, should there be again a probability of her becoming a mother, she would not trust the life of her child within the walls of Sud-

ley Castle; — and he remembered the strict injunction his lord had given him in the case of the disinterment of Edith, not to presume to act again without his authority. He remembered also that he had been much dissatisfied with the result of Father John's imprisonment, and also with the mode adopted for recovering Holgrave: but the present was a moment that would warrant decisive measures — so he proceeded to the door, and desired the retainers to follow on to Winchcombe, and seize the monk. But there was an evident unwillingness to obey: the name of John Ball had spread through the land, and there was so much of misty brightness encircling it — so many strange stories were told of him — so mysterious were often his appearances and disappearings — and so high was the veneration his novel doctrines inspired — that even the lawless retainer shrank from perilling his soul by molesting so sanctified a being. Besides, the former assault was not forgotten, with all the strange exaggerations which had seemed to render miraculous the circumstances of a handful of men liberating a prisoner.

"My lord has little to expect from the faith of those who are fed and clothed at his hand," said Calverley, indignantly, as he saw, by the hesitation of the retainers, that the capture of the monk was hopeless.

"I would fight for my lord any day," muttered one; "but I do n't like meddling with a priest."

"And one, too, who prophesies," said another.

"Peace, babblers!" interrupted Calverley: "my lord shall hear how his retainers act when a seditious shaveling is inciting the villeins to revolt. Are you afraid of meddling with Stephen Holgrave?" he added, looking, with a sneer, at the first speaker.

"I am afraid of no man!" he replied, doggedly.

"Come on then? Let us at least secure *him*," cried Calverley, bounding forward and followed by the retainers. They hastened on through Winchcombe, and, a little beyond the town, descried the prophet surrounded by a multitude, consisting not only of the men of Winchcombe, who took an interest in the subject, but of numbers residing far beyond.

Calverley pressed forward towards the crowd, and so powerful is the influence of habitual obedience, that he was actually in the midst of them before any disposition to arrest his progress was manifested. But then arose the cry of "The holy father! — the prophet!" and the retainer who had replied to Calverley, perceiving from the popular movement the error into which the people had fallen, shouted out "Stand back, men! we will not harm a hair of the prophet's head! — it is Stephen Holgrave we want."

"And will you allow Stephen Holgrave, who has tarried a willing prisoner —"

"No! no! no!" from a hundred voices, overpowered the address of John Ball.

"Away, Holgrave, away! we hold you free!" And Holgrave, taking advantage of the opportunity, withdrew from the side of John Ball, and springing on the back of an offered steed, was presently beyond reach of pursuit, even had pursuit been attempted.

But Calverley was so mortified on being thus baffled, and so thoroughly convinced of the inutility of opposing the popular feeling, that he made no attempt to force a passage through the clubs and staves that were marshalled before him; he turned away towards Sudley, vowing, however, within himself, that the villeins generally, but more particularly those whom his quick glance had identified, should suffer for that morning's contumacy.

The excitement and enthusiasm, which had freed Holgrave, was still glowing in the breasts of the crowd, when a single horseman was observed

on the summit of the hill at a short distance, galloping on with the fleetness of the wind. He was scarcely heeded at first, but when another and another, following with the same headlong speed, successively appeared, the attention of the people was arrested; and when the horse of the first rider, reeking with foam and sweat, sunk down, within a few yards of the mass, and the man, after struggling an instant, disengaged his legs and leaped in among them, exclaiming in a voice scarcely audible from agitation, "Save me! save me! save a poor debtor from prison! — from selling himself to pay his debts! — save me to work as a free man and pay all!" — the fever of excitement seemed to have reached its climax. Without considering an instant what manner of man he might be, they closed around him, and pressing the exhausted wretch towards the monk, vowed to resist to the death any attempts to arrest him. It was in vain that the pursuers, who had now come up, stated that the fugitive was not a debtor, but a notorious perjurer, who had fled from Gloucester to avoid his trial: their assertions were not attended to. The populace felt, that in their united strength, they could protect as well as free; and it is almost a question if they would, at the moment, have given up the man had his guilt been proved to a demonstration. However, as it was merely a matter of opinion which to believe, the pursuers or the pursued, the result need scarcely be told; the fugitive was hedged round with men and weapons, and the horsemen, after uttering many an idle threat, rode on to Sudley Castle to call upon the steward to assist in his recapture. The accused marked their course; and, after breathing out the most fervent gratitude to his preservers, he approached John Ball, and, bending his head, said, in a subdued tone,

"How have I desired to behold the prophet — who hath risen up to be the champion of the oppressed. My breast burned within me when I saw the poor man trampled on. I sheltered a bondman — I was vexed with the law — stripped of my all — beggared, and nothing left me but bondage or a jail! — I am weary of the hard hand that presses down the poor! Holy father, let me join the good cause."

John Ball saw at a glance that the man was above the vulgar, and rejoicing that he could add one intelligent being to the illiterate mass who had become converts to his doctrines, he gladly accepted the offer of an ally who promised to be so serviceable; and, apprehensive that as the hour for a simultaneous rising had not yet come, a farther display might rather injure than benefit the cause, pronounced a benediction over the multitude, and promising to appear soon among them again, desired each man to go to his regular business, and remain quiet till the appointed hour. He then took the arm of his new colleague, and hurried him to a secret opening in an adjacent quarry.

In the individual thus opportunely rescued, the reader will probably recognise Black Jack. He had been detected in a conspiracy, from which, had his character been already taintless, there would have been but little chance of escape. But as matters really stood, the slightest shadow of guilt would have been made to assume a form sufficiently tangible to convict him.

On the second evening after, when Calverley was in his private sitting room, the door was thrown suddenly open.

"Hist! Master Calverley," said Black Jack, entering abruptly, yet noiselessly. "Do n't be frightened, it is only Jack Oakley; — nay, nay, we do n't part so" (springing between Calverley and the door, as the steward, upon recognising the intruder, made an effort to pass from the room); — "nay, nay, steward, we do n't part company so soon;" and drawing a dagger from his bosom, and seizing Calverley in his muscular grasp, he forced him back to his seat. "You had more relish," continued he, "for

an interview yesterday morning, when you led on the pack to hunt for poor Black Jack ! but *he* had escaped you — yes, *he* had escaped you,” (speaking between his set teeth, and looking as if it would do his heart good to plunge the weapon he was fingering in Calverley’s bosom.) “Did you think,” he added, after a moment’s pause, during which he had replaced the dagger within his vest — “did you think Black Jack knew so little of you as to trust his life in your hands, when he saw the blood-hounds making for Sudley ? No, no — I knew too well that Thomas Calverley, instead of whispering to the retainers that I was a hireling of the Lord of Sudley, would give the assistance my enemies asked — and you did ! — yes, you did ;” and his hand, as if instinctively, was again upon the hilt of his dagger, as he looked for a moment at Calverley with the glaring eye, set teeth, and suppressed breath of one who has resolved upon some bloody deed. But the temptation passed away, the rigid features relaxed, and withdrawing his hand from his bosom, and humming a snatch from some popular air, he walked up to the window.

The reader will readily imagine that this was a relief to Calverley. Even a dagger in the hands of a man possessing the physical strength of Black Jack, was not a weapon to be looked upon with indifference, especially by an unarmed and surprised man. But Calverley, adroitly availing himself of the evident change of purpose in Black Jack, said, in as stern a voice as he could command, “This is strange conduct, Master Oakley !”

“Tis so, steward,” returned Black Jack, speaking in his usually self-confident tone ; — “I dare say you do think it strange that a man should steal into this castle, and hide himself for two or three hours, on purpose to scare you out of your wits ; but it was not to threaten or frighten you either, I have come.”

“For what purpose, then ?”

“For money ; and for what money will buy — drink. Have you any wine in the room ?”

“No, but I will fetch you some directly.”

“Thank you, steward,” replied Oakley, smiling, “but I would rather wait a few minutes. To be sure, it is a hard thing to be fasting from drink for two whole days ! but then it is better than being a prisoner. We will be good friends, Master Calverley, but we will not put too much faith in one another. And, as for taking your life — an idea which did occur to me just now — by the green wax ! I do n’t think I could do it. To be sure, sometimes an odd fit comes upon me, but I believe, after all, the pen suits my hand better than the sword ; nevertheless, to come to the point, steward, I must have money. I am going to turn an honest man ; to gain the bondman his freedom, and the free man justice. You need not smile, for I have sworn to be a leader of the people.”

“And I suppose Holgrave has sworn, too,” sneered Calverley.

“I believe not ; I have heard nothing as yet of his being a leader : but I left the monk this morning under pretence of rousing the villeins about Cotswold hills, and so managed to get here.”

“Do you know any thing of Holgrave’s rout ?”

“He is gone to London.”

“To London !”

“Yes — will you let his wife follow him ?”

“Let his wife follow him !” repeated Calverley, looking at Oakley with unaffected astonishment ; but instantly recollecting himself, he added — “I do n’t know ;” and again, after pausing a moment, continued — “You, of course, do not mean to keep faith with that seditious monk ?” looking with a scrutinizing glance at Oakley.

“By the green wax, but I do ! I can never practise my own calling again ; and at any rate, have tried cheating, and lying, and so on, long enough —

and what have I got by them? — the honestest blockhead in England cannot be worse off than John Oakley! So, as I have said, I shall e'en try what honesty will do! Besides, I owe them something for saving me from the gallows. But I cannot do without drink! — and drink, except a beggarly cup of ale or so, is not to be had among them — and so, steward, you must give me money."

"Yes, yes, you shall have money, Oakley, and I tell you, that if you could manage to send me intimation, from time to time, of the plots they are forming, you shall have as much as you desire."

Oakley, as Calverley ceased speaking, looked at him for a moment very earnestly, and an intelligence passed across his face, as if some new light had broken in upon him; but suddenly, with a sort of smile, —

"By the green wax!" said he, "you seem to think lightly of Black Jack's promises! What! you would bribe me to betray their secrets, would you? One never thinks of doing well, but some temptation is sure to come across. — Come, come, give me the money — I shall think of what you have said another time. — Come, come, I can hardly speak for very drought!"

Calverley had no alternative but compliance: but it was provoking almost beyond endurance to have a creature who annoyed him so much, completely, as it were, in his power, and yet be unable to avail himself of the circumstance. There was no alternative, however; for, as we have said before, he was unarmed, and, withal, no fighting man. His chamber was retired, and the extortioner a desperate, unprincipled being, and so Calverley doled out a few pieces of silver, and a piece of gold, which Black Jack snatching up, departed; but as he closed the door, a chuckling laugh, and a drawn bolt, told Calverley that he was overreached by his wily confederate.

The signs of strong excitement became every day more general and more evident, especially in the counties of Kent, Essex, Hertford, and Norfolk. The furnishing of weapons; the whetting and sharpening of hand-bills, wood-knives, and other offensive implements of husbandry; and the general relaxation, and in many places total suspension of labour, were like the heavings and the tremblings which betokened an approaching shock. Indeed, in many places, partial risings had already commenced; but these had originated rather with the free than the bond: rather in resisting the obnoxious tax than in asserting a right to freedom; and the more timid and least influential of the gentry, unable to control the popular movement, had already shut themselves up in their mansions or castles, leaving to the government the task of stemming the storm. Even Richard and his council became alarmed; and after issuing a few proclamations, and a commission of trail baron to try the rioters, awaited the event, trusting to the want of organization among the people for a successful termination of the outbreak.

Affairs had put on this gloomy aspect, the frown of contemptuous suspicion being met by the glance of sullen defiance, and each man of the commonalty either in league with his neighbour or regarding him with distrust, when a meeting of those who, under the powerful influence of John Ball, had fomented all this disorder, took place at Maidstone. It was on a June evening, and just as the twilight had thrown a kind of indistinctness over every object, that Wat Turner, who had been lying for the last hour along a bench in the chimney-corner, to all outward appearance soundly asleep, suddenly started up —

"Is the room ready, Bridget?" he abruptly asked his wife.

"To be sure it is," replied Bridget, who was sitting at the open casement of the large apartment, decked out in all her Sunday finery; "but see, Wat, I declare you have upset my beautiful flowers," as Turner, without heeding the variegated sweets that graced the fireless hearth, brushed past them, and stood upon the earthen floor.

"Confound you, and your flowers!—you are sure every thing is in order?"

"Yes—did n't I tell you so this moment?" answered Bridget, rising somewhat indignantly, and replacing the flower-pot in its original position. "And trouble enough I have had," she continued, "to get in the table, and the chairs, and the benches, and the stools, and put the place so that it might be fit to be seen, all by myself. A fine holyday the wench has got!—but she shall work for this next week!—How many are coming?"

"Question me not, Bridget," replied Turner, in a very serious tone; "but for once in your life try if you can hold your tongue; or, at any rate, say only what is wanted. Do you remember what I told you? Keep the door bolted; and when you hear a knock, say, 'With whom hold you?' and if they answer, 'With King Richard and the true Commons,' open the door; but mind you open it to none else."

"Yes, yes, I will mind: but I verily believe you think me a fool, or a woman who do n't know when to hold her tongue!—you tell me one thing so many times over! Wat—is that John Leicester coming?"

"Yes."

"How I hate the sight of that man! he is so full of consequence, and has so many airs, and talks so much about what he will do when he is king of Norfolk;—just as if an honest black smith was not as good as a dyer any day! Or, as if Wat Turner (Wat Tyler, I mean)—I declare I often catch myself going to call you Turner in the shop,—aye, as if Wat Tyler was n't as good a name as John Leicester! And then he talks about his wife, too. I'll let him see when you are king of Kent."

"Silence! there is a knock." Turner went to the door: "With whom hold you?" he asked.

"With King Richard and the true Commons," was the reply; and the door was instantly unclosed, and John Leicester, a tall pale-complexioned man, with an aquiline visage and sharp black eyes, accompanied by Ralph Rugge, John Kirkby, and Allan Theoder, entered the apartment.

"Ye are the first, my friends," said Turner, cordially grasping the extended hand of Leicester, "and, by St. Nicholas! it is now getting fast on for ten o'clock."

He then strode across the room, and, throwing open a door, ushered his colleagues into a place probably used by Bridget as a sort of store-room, of moderate size, with clay walls, and an earthen floor. A large iron lamp was burning on an oblong table of considerable dimensions that stood in the centre. At the upper end of the table was a chair and stools, and benches were arranged round in proper order.

"Bridget," said Turner, stepping back, "where is the wine?"

"Oh! here—I forgot the wine," said Bridget, handing in a large jug, and then again returning with a number of drinking cups and another measure of wine. Turner placed the liquor on the table, and was just filling some of the cups, when Stephen Holgrave, Thomas Sack, and three others, pushed open the door, and, after a brief salutation, took their seats at the table.

"Here is a health to King Richard and the true Commons!" said Holgrave, taking up his cup.

"We have had enough of kings," said Kirkby, "and lords too—I will drink to none but the true Commons!"

"Why, as for kings," said Turner, "I am not sure; Richard is but a boy yet, and his father was a——"

"I say we will have no Richard, and no king but King of the Commons, and these we will have in every shire in England!" interrupted John Leicester.

Turner looked as if he thought he had as much right to deliver his sen-

timents as the dyer of Norwich, and was about to vindicate his opinions, probably in no very qualified terms, when Black Jack entering, accompanied by a few others, diverted the smith's attention.

"Hah! Jack Straw—welcome!" said Turner: "you see you are not the last. The night is waning, and our friends are not all here yet."

A horn of wine being handed to Oakley, he took his seat at the table; and when about a dozen men had joined them,

"Jack Straw," inquired Turner, "have you made out the conditions?"

"Yes," replied Black Jack, "here they are," drawing a parchment from his pocket.

"Read them! read them! let us hear!" burst from the party; and Oakley began—

"First.—The king shall be required to free all bondmen."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the confederates, "that will do—that is the first thing that must be done."

"Secondly," resumed Oakley, "to pardon all the risings."

"Pardon!" interrupted Turner—"there is no pardon wanted: let them do as they ought to do, and there will be no rising."

"Thirdly.—That all men may buy and sell in any city or town in England."

"Aye," said Rugge, "that is as it should be—I know where I could carry all the hats I could make, and sell them for a good price, if I were but free of the place."

"Fourthly.—That all lands should be rented at four-pence an acre."

"Aye, and enough too!" said Turner; "and, mind ye, nothing but rent—no service. Let every man be free to work, and get money for his work, and give money for his land, and know what he has to pay: I don't like your services—so many days' labour, or so much corn, or so many head of cattle, and so on: and then, if anything happens that he fails to the very day, though the land should have been held by his great-grandfather, why he has no claim to it! 'Tis time all this should be done away with.—But now go on with the rest."

"That was all we agreed upon to ask for," replied Black Jack, looking round upon his associates.

"What!" said the overbearing Leicester, looking fiercely at the ex-foreman,—"did n't I tell you that I was to be the King of Norfolk, and Wat Tyler—?"

"Tush, man!—nonsense!" interrupted Turner, reddening with mingled shame and anger. "Let the bondman be freed, and the land properly parcelled out, and then we can talk about what kings there are to be besides Richard. But I'll tell you, Master Jack Straw, or whatever your name is, that if I cannot read and write like you, I will have a word in the matter as well as yourself—I will have all the lawyers hanged, for one thing: there is so much trickery in the law, that we shall never be sure of whatever is granted, while the men of law can have a crook in it."

"And since we talk of hanging," said Turner, "there is one—" and he looked significantly at Holgrave—"but, never mind; his time will come, Stephen!"

"It will!" answered Holgrave, emphatically; and, as he acquiesced in Turner's implied threat, a smile might be detected on Oakley's lips.

"Friends," said Allan Theoder, speaking for the first time, "I do not hear you say anything about this tax."

"If we had no king," said Kirkby, "we should have no tax grinding down the poor. If that tax had not made a beggar of me, Jack Kirkby would not have been here among you this night."

"But what is it," asked Black Jack, "that I shall add to the parchment?"

"That we shall have no taxes!" said the taciturn Theoder.

"And no king!" added Kirkby.

"And that the lords shall give up their castles, and keep no retainers, and that all the lawyers shall be hanged!" said Turner.

"I tell you," said Leicester, "that when we are all kings, we can do what we like with the lords and the lawyers, and ——"

"And I will tell you, John Leicester, that if it is my will which is to decide, we will have no king but one; and that one shall be Richard. And that all lawyers and escheaters shall lose their heads — aye, by St. Nicholas! and that before four days are gone, the laws shall proceed from my mouth!" interrupted the smith, rising from his stool and striking the table violently with his clenched fist.

While Turner was thus declaiming, a singular-looking being, who sat directly opposite to him, had risen, and, evidently quite unmoved by the vehemence of the smith's manner, and equally regardless of the matter of his speech, only awaited until a pause should enable him to commence his own. The man was about five feet two in height, with thick lips and a short turned-up nose, black bushy brows, overhanging a pair of twinkling gray eyes, and a bald head, receding abruptly from the eyebrows, like those of the lower animals. The moment Turner ceased speaking, the man began, in a deep guttural voice —

"I was brought up there, Wat Tyler, and I can tell you of two places where it can be fired."

"What! Gloucester?"

"What! Sudley Castle?" asked Black Jack and Turner, at once.

"No — the city of London!"

"The city of London!" repeated Turner, in a tone that implied little approval of the suggestion.

"Yes — the city of London, friend Tyler," said Thomas Sack, in that peculiar tone of confidence which says, I know what I say is the best that can be said. — "Yes, the city of London, friend Tyler; and when the city is fired, and the Londoners are running here and there, to save their houses and goods, what will hinder us from taking the Tower, and forcing the king to grant what we ask?"

There seemed reason in this — and Black Jack's imagination instantly picturing the facility which such a thing would afford for the appropriation of the good citizens' treasures, seizing the idea, said quickly —

"By the green wax! our friend counsels well."

"He does counsel well," rejoined one at the bottom of the table. "Would it not be a fine opportunity to pay ourselves for all they have taken from us?" he added, in a lower key, and looking cunningly round upon his companions as he put the interrogatory.

"What!" said Turner, sternly, "would you make us robbers?"

"Robbers! Master Tyler, no — no — it is one thing to rob, and another to repay yourself, if the chance comes in your way, if you have been cheated."

"I do not understand your one thing or your other thing," answered Turner — "but I know this, that we have paid the tax, and that we will pay it no more — but as for touching what belongs to the London folks — I'll tell you what, if we do set fire to London, by St. Nicholas! if I see my own son Tom taking a penny's worth, I will fling him into the flames!"

"You are are right," said Holgrave, "we want to be free men, not plunderers."

The man did not reply, and Black Jack, congratulating himself that he had prudently kept his own counsel, endeavoured to turn the attention of the leaders from the consequences to the cause. Holgrave positively refused to sanction the contemplated firing; "No man," said he, "has a right to burn what does not belong to him." But he was only one man,

and the sense of abstract justice was not sufficiently strong in those about him, to overbalance the advantages that might result from the deed. Certainly, to speak the truth, Turner hesitated some time before he assented, but the pithy language of Thomas Sack, and the covert insinuations of the lettered Oakley, overpowered his better judgment, and the thing was decided upon.

"Halloo — confederates! you have forgotten one thing, which, after all, may do us more good than all the conditions put together. What thing ye of burning all the deeds and court-rolls of manors we can lay our hands on? The knaves will find it no easy matter to prove their title to the land, or to the rent or to the bondmen either."

Twenty brawny hands grasped successively that of the spokesman, and an applauding murmur ran through the meeting.

"Aye, aye, burn the court-rolls — burn the court-rolls!" ran from mouth to mouth. "We defy the lords to claim rent or service then."

"Yes," cried Holgrave, starting up eagerly, "if the court-rolls are burned, who can claim the bondman?"

"Aye, or, as you said just now, Jack Straw, who can say to his vassal 'You owe me this service or that service,'" added the smith.

This proposition was then eagerly adopted and decided upon without a dissentient voice.

The reader may, perhaps, be surprised that all this should pass without eliciting either opposition or remark from the king of Norfolk; but the fact was, that Leicester, although in general a very temperate man, had been so much pleased with the flavour of Wat Turner's wine, and had so often replenished his cup, that he had not been, for the last half hour, precisely in a situation either to combat or agree to any proposition. Indeed, had any of the members been bold enough to submit a motion, depriving him of his kingship elect, it is a question if he would have resisted, so much was the natural arrogance and asperity of his temper softened by the genial beverage.

The wine, too, began to exhibit many other of the confederates in colours very different from such as they had at first shown, but the change generally was not such as was wrought in Leicester; — for vindictive cruelty and selfish rapacity might now be detected in many of those who, at the outset, had spoken only of justice and right. Then, too, were put forth the claims which each fancied he possessed of ranking above his fellows. "Did not I provide so many clubs or spears — or, did not I, or my father, or uncle," as the case might be, "give so much corn to make bread — or so much silk to make a banner — or so much leather to make jacks?" &c.

"And have not I," said Turner, whom an extra cup had made more than usually a braggart; "Have not I forged as many spear-heads as ye can find handles for? and has not John Tickle, the London doublet-maker, made me sixty as stout leathern doublets as man could wish to wear? and can I not bring the tough sinews of the brave Kentish men to strike down the hirelings of that foul council which has brought all this misery on the people? — and will ye talk of your pitiful gifts? Am not I the right hand of the prophet?"

"The prophet disdains the aid of the boaster!" said John Ball, walking up to the chair which had stood so long empty, and looking sternly round upon the confederates. "Is it thus ye talk when ye assemble? Are wine-bibbers, and railers, and boasters, to lead the people to justice? Is the bondman to put off his yoke by means of those who contend for the highest places? Shame! — shame to ye!" and his eye rested upon Turner.

For an instant, as the monk spoke, the smith's cheek glowed, and he thought it was not kindly done to reprove, in so marked a manner, one who, through rescuing him, had been compelled to fly like a felon, and

assume a name that did not belong to his father. However, he had been accustomed to pay implicit obedience to the monk.

"Father John," said he, "it was not for the sake of boasting I spoke : what Wat Turner does, he does because he thinks it is right. I ought to have said Wat Tyler," he added, recollecting himself and looking round ; "but the truth will out, and there's no use in making a secret. Some of ye do know the truth already, and some do not : but, however, I'll now tell ye, that because in a quarrel I happened to kill one of Lord de Boteler's retainers, I came here to Maidstone and took the name of poor old Wat Tyler, my mother's brother — peace to his soul ! and made the folks believe that I was a sort of runaway son."

"And if you had never known me," said Holgrave, starting up and grasping Turner's hand, "you need not have changed your name : but you are an honest man, let you be called what you may — and Stephen Holgrave will never forget what you have done for him and his."

John Ball, whatever he may have felt, had too much good sense to weaken his ascendancy by making any acknowledgment. If he was the soul of the confederacy — Wat Turner, or Tyler, as we shall henceforward call him, was the body ; — he might inspire the thought, but Tyler must direct the physical movement : and, therefore, it was absolutely requisite that the smith should in himself set the wholesome example of being amenable to discipline. The monk, therefore, without farther comment, began to ask of their capabilities, their resources, and arrangements ; and it was finally agreed upon, after much deliberation, that Tyler should command the Kentish division, and Jack Oakley, or, as he now chose to style himself, Jack Straw (probably from the then custom of bailiffs wearing straws in their hats,) the bodies that were to march upon London from Essex.

"But — remember !" added John Ball, impressively, and, rising from his seat, as did all who were assembled ; "remember that ye do not slay except in self-defence ; and that, above all things, ye hold sacred the Lord's anointed. And may *He*," elevating his eyes and hands, "who inspired the thought — bless the deed ! The first hour of the sabbath-morn has just struck, — let us not trespass farther on the holy day. — Depart in peace."

The monk then left the apartment, and the confederates presently retired.

CHAPTER VI.

BUT, despite the prophet's injunction, the tumultuary rising commenced with blood. The courts of trail baron were dispersed, and at Stamford the jurors beheaded, and their heads borne on lances to overawe those who might be inclined to arrest the progress of the insurgents. Every building suspected of containing court-rolls was searched ; all the documents found were destroyed, and the villeins met with, in the line of march, pronounced free, and incited to join the popular insurrection. Their numbers were thus increased every mile of ground they passed over, till, at length, the whole mass amounted to one hundred thousand able-bodied men. It is impossible to say what such a force might not have effected, had there been a proper degree of subordination kept up among the led, or a proper degree of confidence and understanding among the leaders : but, as is usual in popular commotions, the reverse of this was the case. No one chose to occupy the lowest place, and each thought he could direct movements and affairs much better than the actual leader. Hence arose endless contentions and secessions, till at length from want of the grand principle of adhesion — unanimity, the vast body threatened to fall asunder, as if crushed by its own weight.

These things, however, gave little concern to the worthy who commanded the Kentish division. Tyler, though an excellent blacksmith, possessed few of the qualities requisite for forming a good general. Provided there was no very sensible diminution in the number of his followers, he cared not a straw for the score or two who, after quarrelling, or perhaps fighting, withdrew in such disgust, that they vowed rather to pay the full tax for ever than submit to the insolence of the rebels. One man could fight as well as another, reasoned he; and, provided he was obeyed, what mattered it by whom. Dick went and Tom came—it was sure to be all one in the end.

Oakley, on the other hand, although, perhaps, equally arrogant when invested with this novel and temporary power, was more plausible, and managed to keep up a better understanding among his followers than Tyler. This sort of conciliatory conduct was, in a great measure, forced upon him by the circumstance of Leicester being immediately next him in command, and by the wish he had that no ill feelings against himself might weaken his authority when any favourable opportunity offered of reaping a golden harvest.

He knew that he had little co-operation to expect from Leicester, for independently of the personal enmity of the latter, which would rather induce opposition than support, the chief of Norfolk had not a particle of rapacity in his composition. Indeed, it is not often that he whose gaze is fixed upon some bold elevation, will stoop to rake in mire, even when sure of discovering gold. Leicester was very indignant at thus becoming a subordinate, but the election of the prophet was decisive, and he was compelled to submit; for John Ball, seeing that one so rash and haughty was not adapted to possess the unlimited control to which his influence, and the sacrifices he had made, seemed to entitle him, resolved that his indiscretion should be kept in check by the prudence and intelligence of Oakley.

The Essex division had marched on until within about three miles of the city of London, and here they halted, partly through fatigue and partly to interchange communications with the Kentish men; it having been determined, that while the latter were forcing a passage over London Bridge, the men of Essex should, at the same moment, effect an entrance by the east gate, and thus distract the attention of the citizens.

In the motley crowd, of nearly sixty thousand men, the most conspicuous figure was, perhaps, John Leicester himself, cased in a complete suit of steel armour, (taken as lawful spoil from some castle in the route) waving in the sun a bright Damascus scimitar, while he gave directions, in an authoritative tone, to a peasant who was unloosing the trappings of a large black horse, from which Leicester had just alighted. Standing at a short distance from him, John Oakley, otherwise Jack Straw, formed an adjunct little less important in the picturesque of the scene. Unwilling to encumber himself with armour, his portly person was defended by a leathern jack, covered over with a thick quilting of crimson silk, dagger proof; and in this guise, he contrasted well with the monk clad in dark woollen, with whom he was engaged in conversation—although turning every now and then his large blue eyes towards a tempting display of eatables and wine profusely spread under the shade of a tree. A cluster of formidable-looking men in tough leathern jacks, were laying aside their hand-bills and swords, and dividing the contents of a large satchel. There was a group variously armed and accoutred, some wearing the shirt of mail with the yew-tree bow in their hands and quivers of arrows at their backs; and others in doublets of leather or frieze, with swords, some rusty and some bright, or staves, or sharp-pointed clubs, or reaping hooks, or wood-knives.

The arrival of such a body as the Essex men, so near the city, and the approach of the Kentish men, was, of course, no secret to those who inhab-

ited the Tower, but there was no standing army ready, at a moment's notice, to march out and oppose their progress. They had, indeed, six hundred archers within the Tower, but it was considered the most prudent course not to send them forth, lest, while they were attacking one division, another might come on and make themselves masters of the strong hold. Many of the nobles who resided beyond the city walls fled from their dwellings to seek a refuge in the Tower, and among these Roland de Boteler, at his lady's earnest entreaty, withdrew with her, from his mansion just beyond Bishopgate, and sought a temporary shelter within the fortress.

Isabella was sitting in an apartment with the fair Joan of Kent, expatiating upon the insolence of the common people, and detailing a solitary instance of the evil that the family of a bondman might work to his lord, when the door was thrown open, and Richard, with his beautiful countenance flushed with excitement, and followed by the archbishop of Canterbury, abruptly entered.

"We are resolved, my lord bishop," said Richard, as he threw himself on a seat by his mother; and, turning to an attendant, commanded that the royal barge should be instantly in readiness.

"You surely do not intend leaving the Tower," asked the queen-mother apprehensively.

"Madam," said Sudbury, with some heat, "his grace has so determined; and, moreover, contrary to the advice of his noble cousins and counsellors, he will go down the river and parley with the villeins!"

The impetuosity of sixteen was not to be turned aside from its purpose by the remonstrances of the archbishop, or even the entreaties of a mother. Isabella, too, ventured to expostulate, but without effect; and accompanied by Thomas of Woodstock, his uncle, Sir Robert Hales, the treasurer, the Earl of Oxford, De Boteler, and Simon Sudbury, who, though reprobating his majesty's conduct, generously resolved to share its consequences, Richard stepped into the royal barge with the most sanguine hopes of quelling the insurrection.

The order had been so suddenly given that there was no intimation of the sovereign's excursion until the royal barge met the eye, consequently there was none of that excitement usual upon the most simple movements of royalty. Indeed, at any rate, the attention of all classes was, at this moment, so occupied by the commons, that the king was scarcely thought of.

They had rowed about a mile down the river, when the chancellor, who was gazing with vacant eyes, but an occupied mind, upon the water, had his attention suddenly fixed.

"Does your grace see that little boat just before us?"

"Yes," replied Richard.

"I am much mistaken," resumed Sudbury, quickly, "if that figure in the dark cloak is not he whose evil counsel has spread like a pestilence through the land."

"What! the audacious monk who intruded upon us at Kennington?"

"The same, your grace, if my judgment be correct."

"Let him be instantly seized!" replied the impetuous Richard. The boat was, accordingly, hailed, and John Ball dragged into the barge, and at once identified by Sudbury and De Boteler. The monk did not resist either the capture or the bands that were bound around him; neither did he reply to the reproaches that were showered upon him; but silently and unresistingly suffered himself to be thrown into the bottom of the barge.

In a few minutes after this was effected, Richard's quick eye was suddenly attracted by an appearance on the beach.

"By my faith, cousin," said he, addressing Thomas of Woodstock, "yonder are the varlets! Do you see how bravely their pennons are waving,

and how, here and there, among their black heads, something bright glitters in the sun?"

"That is their weapons, my liege," said Woodstock.

"Stolen from the castles and houses they have plundered," added Sudbury.

"Put to shore quickly," said Richard; "and let us see if those rebels will dare to appear in harness before their king!"

"You would not venture your sacred person among them, my liege!" cried Sir Robert Hales the treasurer, in alarm.

"What! think you, Sir Treasurer," asked De Boteler, "that the knaves, vile as they are, would harm his grace?"

"My Lord Baron," said Sudbury, sternly, "it is not well than a man of your experience should speak thus. Give not your countenance to an act that may yet lie heavy upon your soul?" Richard's cheek kindled as the baron stood rebuked; and with the generous indignation of youth, he said, in a tone of evident displeasure —

"My Lord Bishop, the Baron de Boteler did not counsel us to land: he was only doubting how far the impudence of those commons might go." Sudbury, knowing that soft words might turn away wrath, and perceiving that little good would be effected in the present case by pursuing a different course, suffered Sir Robert Hales to entreat, even as a father would entreat his only son, that the young king should not peril his life by venturing his royal person among those who were up in arms against his authority. But when he saw that Richard's ingenuous mind was touched by the earnest manner of the treasurer, he then prudently put his own weight into the balance, and the scale turned as he desired.

"Go you, then, my lord of Oxford," said Richard, "since it does not appear wise that we, ourselves, should land, and ask those men why they thus disturb the peace of their sovereign lord the king."

Robert de Vere accordingly, accompanied only by three men-at-arms, one to act as herald, and two as a sort of body guard, quitted the barge to hold par lance with the rebels.

"Why we are thus up in arms?" said Leicester, without circumlocution, as the herald proclaimed the king's interrogatory, — "why, because those who should command are thought nothing of, and those who do command ought to have their heads struck off."

"This is no meet answer, *Sir Knight*," said Oxford, glancing ironically at Leicester's armour. "You must consider of something more to the matter of his grace's demand, or Robert de Vere can be no messenger."

"Yes, yes, we will consider of some more fitting answer," said Leicester fiercely; — and after consulting earnestly for a few minutes with Jack Straw, Thomas Sack, and other leaders, he returned to De Vere, and said —

"Hear you, Robert de Vere, we demand that all whose names are in that parchment shall be beheaded, because they are enemies to the true commons, and evil counsellors to the king. And when this is done we will let his grace know what else we demand."

Robert de Vere took the scroll from Leicester with a haughty air, and glancing over the contents, without vouchsafing a word, turned away and rejoined the king.

"These knaves wish to carry things with a strong hand, my liege," said the Earl of Oxford, bending his knee as he presented the scroll.

"What!" said Richard, as his eye ran over the characters, "John, duke of Lancaster; Simon Sudbury, lord chancellor; John Fordham, clerk of the privy seal; Sir Robert Hales, treasurer; the bishop of London; Sir Robert Belknap, the chief justice; Sir Ralph Ferrers, and Sir Robert Bessington. What! is this all the noble blood they wish to spill? By

my faith!" he added, trampling the parchment under his foot, "we will listen to nothing more the knaves have to say; and ye may tell them that as they are bondmen so shall they remain; and that as my fathers ruled them with a rod of iron, so shall I rule them with a rod of scorpions."

But this burst of indignation soon passed away, and upon the suggestion of the prudent Sir Robert Hales, he sent an evasive answer, with a command that the commons should attend him at Windsor on the Sunday following.

The royal barge then returned to the Tower, and John Ball was again the tenant of a dungeon.

Tyler and his Kentish men were at this time upon Blackheath, awaiting the monk impatiently, who had strictly enjoined that no attack should be made upon London till the word was received from him. The day, however, wore away, and John Ball did not appear. The men grew impatient, but Tyler, though brooking the delay as ill as the most ardent among them, hesitated to take any decided step until the sanction of the prophet should warrant the deed.

"By St. Nicholas!" cried he at last, "something ill has befallen the holy man, or he would have been here before now. We will march on directly and find him, or the London folks shall look to it."

This resolution was received with acclamation, and the whole mass moved forward with a quick step. Their direct way would have been to keep as far as was possible the banks of the Thames in view, until they arrived at London Bridge, but Sudbury's palace was at Lambeth, and Tyler, suspecting that the archbishop had some hand in the detention of the monk, vowed that his residence should be burned to the ground if some tidings were not gained of him. On they went, therefore, to Southwark; and with shouts and execrations, and torches flaming in their hands, approached the walls of the episcopal edifice. The gates were forced; the affrighted domestics and retainers fled; and it was well that Tyler, as he rushed on through room and corridor, did not encounter Sudbury; but the prelate being fortunately in the Tower, escaped the rage of the vindictive smith.

"He has been an ill friend to him," said Tyler, "even if he should not have harmed him now," (as a trembling domestic assured him that no prisoner had entered the palace,) "and he deserves that his head should be carried on a pole before us to London Bridge."

And when, at length, the intruders were satisfied that the palace contained neither bishop nor monk, the search commenced for the documents and records. Cabinets were broken open, drawers and boxes forced, and the contents thrown carelessly about; jewels, silk damasks, and gold embroidery, were trampled under foot with as much loss of value through wantonness as if the spoilers had enriched themselves—a thing which, if done at all, was done to so small an extent, that he only who snatched up a gem or a piece of gold could have said that a theft had been committed.

In each apartment the writings found were thrown in a heap, and blazing torches flung upon them. These igniting the flooring and furniture, the building was presently in a blaze in a dozen different directions, and the Kentish men, with as rapid a step as they had approached, marched away, vowing vengeance to all the enemies of their prophet.

It was midnight when they arrived within view of London, but the red tinge in the southern horizon, and the glare of their thousand torches, had warned the citizens of their approach; the gates were shut, and the bridge itself crowded with aroused citizens. Tyler's first command was that they should rush on and set fire to the gates; but Holgrave had seen more of warfare than he, and he knew that, even though they might succeed in

passing the bridge, if the citizens were thoroughly provoked, they might, in their narrow streets, occasion much annoyance; he, therefore, counselled Tyler to remain with the men marshalled before the bridge, while three or four, who had some knowledge of the city, and whom he would himself accompany, should pass stealthily over the river, and ascertain if their friends on the other side were ready to assist them. Tyler reluctantly agreed to this proposal.

Holgrave and two others then departed from the main body, unloosed a small boat from its moorings, and, in less than five minutes, they were walking, in the twilight of a starry midsummer's night, down the rough stone pathway of Thames-street.

While the guide paused for a moment to recollect the way to the headquarters of the insurgents, some one who passed was heard speaking in a tone which fell upon Stephen's ear like a sound he ought to remember; he sprang from the side of his comrades, and, standing before the strangers, demanded, "With whom hold you?"

"With King Richard and the true Commons!" was the reply. "Is it not Stephen Holgrave?" continued the galleyman, holding out his hand.

"Yes," replied Holgrave, giving it a friendly pressure; "I thought I knew your voice."

"Do you know *my* voice?" asked one of Wells's companions.

"Ah! Merritt, you are the man I wanted — when did you see Father John? can you tell anything of him?"

"Is not the father with Tyler?" asked Merritt. Holgrave then knew that some mishap must have befallen the monk; and the possibility of his being in the Tower occurred to all.

"Hollo!" cried the galleyman, as, at this moment, a party of men approached — "with whom hold ye, mates?"

"With whom should we hold," said the foremost, "but with King Richard and the true Commons?"

"Well met, then," said Wells; "for the true commons are up — no time is to be lost — the prophet is in prison. Let each man steer his own course, muster all the hands he can, and meet on Tower-hill. Hark! that stroke tells one — remember we meet at two, and we will see if the Londoners and men of Kent cannot shake hands before the clock has tolled three."

The galleyman then hurried Holgrave up a narrow dark street, where, tapping gently at a door, it was instantly opened, to Stephen's great surprise, by old Hartwell.

"Is that you, Robin!" said a soft voice; and a female face was seen peeping half way down the stairs.

"Yes, yes; but go, Lucy, and tell that Stephen Holgrave is here."

"What! Stephen Holgrave!" said the warm-hearted Lucy, springing down the stairs; but, light and quick as was her step, another reached the bottom before her, and, with a faint shriek, Margaret Holgrave fell on her husband's neck.

"Father," resumed Wells, "take up that lamp, and we'll get a flask of the best, to drink a health to the rising; and do you, Holgrave, go up and just take a look at your children, and then we must be gone."

"And the strife will begin this night!" said Margaret fearfully, as Holgrave, bending over the bed, where lay two sleeping children, glanced for an instant at a dark-haired boy of five or six, and then, taking a little rosy infant of about a twelve-month in his arms, kissed, and gazed upon its face with all the delight of a father.

"There will be no strife, Margaret, to-night, or to-morrow. The commons of London are rising to help us, and the king will not hold out when he sees — but no matter. Tell me how you have fared. When I left

Sudley, to join the commons, you were taken charge of by your brother, who, no doubt, placed you here with your friend Lucy, on her marriage with Wells——"

"Stephen!" said the galleyman, from below.

"Good heavens! I must go. Bless you, Margaret! — bless you! I will see you again soon! May God keep ye both!" Gently laying down the still sleeping babe, he tore himself from the arms of his weeping wife, and rushed down the stairs.

Holgrave had never much reason to boast of the gift of speech, more especially when his feelings were in any wise affected. Even the galleyman was not as eloquent now as upon former occasions, and the two issued forth, and walked on for about five minutes, without exchanging a word. Wells, at length, stopped at a house in the vicinity of St. Bartholomew's Priory, with a heavy gothic stone arch, enclosing an iron studded door, and the windows of the first, and still more the second, story projecting so as to cast a strong shadow over the casement of the ground-floor. Wells tapped twice with the hilt of his dagger at the oaken door, which was softly opened, and he and Holgrave entered.

A low stone passage conducted them into a spacious wainscoted room well lighted, and so full of company that it was not possible, at a glance, to guess at their number; and here, at the head of a long, narrow table, was Black Jack standing erect on the seat which he should have occupied in a different manner, and, with his eyes dancing, and his nose and cheeks glowing, haranguing the crowd in a style of familiar eloquence.

"What, my old friend! what do you do here?" said the galleyman aloud, but evidently speaking to himself.

"Why," replied Holgrave, imagining the exclamation addressed to him, "I suppose he has left the Essex men to try what can be done among the bondmen!"

"But what has *he* to do with the Essex men or the bondmen?" asked the galleyman.

"Why, do you not know that that is Jack Straw, the Essex captain?"

"He Jack Straw!" cried Wells, with such a look as if his eyes rested on a spectre. "Have I not heard John Ball say that he wished Wat Tyler were like Jack Straw?"

"Yes; Father John thinks better of him than of any who leads: but to tell you the truth," added Holgrave, in a whisper, "though he can read and write, and is, as Father John says, a prudent man — I do n't like him."

"Do you know him?" emphatically asked the galleyman.

"To be sure I do!"

"But I mean," impatiently resumed Wells, "did you ever see him before he was with those Essex men?"

"No."

"Then, Stephen Holgrave, a word in your ear: — I know him; and let that man hoist what colours he may, steer clear of him — you understand me!"

Holgrave had no time to reply, when Wells, suddenly, in a gay careless tone, accosted a man who was approaching the spot where they stood.

"Hah! Harvey! who thought of seeing you among the true commons?"

Harvey looked at the speaker an instant, and then, recognising him as poor Beauchamp's successor in the jury, was about to joke him upon his long fast, when his eyes gleaming upon Holgrave, he thought it the most prudent course to make no allusion to the matter, but directly to reply to Well's salutation.

"Why my business in the country," said he, "fell off a little; and so I was trying to make out a living here, and Tom Merritt coming across me, it took little to persuade me to hold with the commons."

"In hopes of being well paid," thought the galleyman, though he said nothing; he merely smiled an answer, and then, drawing Harvey a little aside, whispered him —

"But what gale drove our worthy foreman here?"

"Oh! you know, I suppose, that he is a sworn brother among the leaders, though I did n't know it till this very evening, when it happened that I was sent to the Essex men to know when they thought of marching. You know Black Jack gets on badly without a drop, and, as he could hardly obtain enough among them to wet his lips, he took the opportunity, as he said, of my coming to raise a good spirit among the bondmen—but in truth to——" and he put an empty wine-cup, that he held in his hands, to his mouth.

The apartment was so densely filled, that the door had opened, while this conversation passed, without attracting the least attention; but Wells, who bethought him that the minutes were fitting, found a passage for himself, and, approaching the table, placed a stool that he took from behind one who had relinquished it in order that not a word that fell from Jack Straw should escape him, and, mounting upon it, shouted out at the top of his voice —

"With whom hold ye, friends?"

There was a sudden hush at this abrupt interrogatory, and Jack Straw was about to answer in no very gentle manner, when, fixing his penetrating eyes upon Wells, a significant glance informed the galleyman that he was recognised, and, suppressing the epithet he was about to use, Oakley merely replied —

"We hold, as all honest men ought — with King Richard and the true Commons!"

"It is of little use holding with them," returned Wells, "if you stand talking there all night: — the time is now come for action, not speech — at two, the commons of London meet on Tower-hill — that is my message." He then turned away, and was hurrying with Holgrave from the room, when Jack Straw, stepping round from his post of orator, intercepted him, and, seizing him by the arm, whispered in his ear —

"Are you leaders too? By the green wax! I suppose I shall see the ghost of the ferret among the good commons next! But mind ye, galleyman — not a syllable that we ever met!" glancing his eyes at Holgrave.

"Not a word," replied Wells, breaking from the foreman's hold, and effecting a precipitate retreat.

At the appointed hour the commons of London mustered in strong force on Tower-hill; and, headed by Wells, passed on to London Bridge. Here they halted, and, upon a blazing brand being affixed to a long spear, and elevated in the air, a sudden shout from the thousands occupying the southern bank, was re-echoed by the Londoners, and caused, as might be expected, a strong sensation among the citizens, inducing a disposition rather to concede than to provoke. The elevation of a second torch was the signal that a parley had been demanded by the loyalists; and then the sudden silence was almost as startling as had been the previous tumult. The horn of the lord mayor's herald again sounded the parley: those who styled themselves the commons demanded that the gates should be opened, and their brethren of Kent permitted to pass. There was some scruple as to the propriety of acceding to this demand, which, however, was soon got over by the unequivocal assurance that the commons *would* pass at any rate; and that, if farther opposition was offered, their first act, upon entering the city, would be to tear down the houses and demolish the bridge. This argument was forcible; and, as there appeared no alternative, the mayor, first stipulating that the houses and stalls on the bridge should remain unharmed, and that free passage should be granted to the citizens to return to their dwellings, passed, with the civic force, between the opening

ranks of the dictating commonalty. Those of the latter, who had arrows, rested meanwhile on their bows, and those who were armed with swords and spears on their cross-hilts and handles; — and thus, in the attitude of submission, and in the silence of peace, stood the confederates until the last citizen had gone by. Then the close and the rush, and the simultaneous shout, came upon the eye and ear like the gathering of mighty waters; and, ere five minutes elapsed from the departure of the mayor, the bridge groaned with the hurried tread of the insurgents, and Tyler planted midway the banner of St. George on the highest house-top.

Shouting for the prophet, Tyler and the galleyman led on the multitude to Tower-hill; but when here, it was to little purpose that the former and Holgrave went rapidly along the verge of the moat, from one extremity to the other, and to as little purpose did the smith's practised eye run over every bar and fastening that came within his ken — he could detect nothing in the massive walls but the strong work of a skilful artizan.

"The ditch is deep," said Holgrave; "but a part could easily be filled up; and if we had ladders, the wall is not high."

"Aye, or if you had a score or two of hempen ropes, with good grappling irons, it would be but boy's play to get aloft," said the galleyman.

Unfortunately, however, they were provided neither with ladders nor ropes; but even had they been so, it is doubtful whether they would have been put in requisition — for now arose the question as to what part of the building they ought to attack, and where lay the prison of the prophet, admitting that he was a prisoner. A thousand suppositions and conjectures were afloat, but no one was sufficiently well acquainted with the building to give a decisive answer. Indeed, it appeared that scarcely a single individual among them had ever crossed the drawbridge.

An angry debate now ensued among the leaders. Some, confiding in their numerical force, and zealous for the liberation of the prophet, were for storming the fortress at any point, and for effecting their object more speedily, proposed razing to the foundation some of the neighbouring houses, and filling up the ditch with the materials. Others thought such an attack might rather militate against themselves than turn to any account in redress of grievances, and after all might fail to advantage the monk: these proposed that a parley should be demanded, and their resolutions submitted to the king, with a requisition for the prophet's release.

"Men of Kent!" shouted Tyler, indignant at the pacific proposal, "what, do you suppose King Richard and his counsel, cooped up yonder, will think of us while we stand talking and gaping here? Think ye they will take off the poll tax, or free the bondman? or open the prison door of our holy prophet, while they see us waiting like so many beggars, for them to read what is written on the sheepskins? I hold, that leaving half our brave fellows here, to let them know that if we do not mount their walls, we have an eye upon them, the rest should go on and see what is to be done in other parts of London. Who knows but we might get hold of that mortal fiend, John of Gaunt; if we once had him, by St. Nicholas! we might ask for what we liked. Stephen Holgrave, do you keep watch here, and let no one come or go: should there be anything to be said, you know what to say — that is enough." And then, marshalling off a strong and picked body from among his followers, the smith hurried forward, accompanied by the galleyman and Kirkby, through the city, injuring neither person nor property, but only exacting from every one they encountered in their progress, a shout and a God-speed for the true commons.

The barred gates of the Fleet prison flew open before the assailants, and the wretched inmates felt their feverish temples once more cooled by the pure breath of liberty. At about a hundred paces from the Fleet, they passed a house, having the bush suspended in front, indicating its posses-

ser to be a vintner; and the host himself, with singular fool-hardiness, stood looking out from the open casement of the first story.

"With whom hold ye, friend?" said Tyler, as he passed, imagining, from the dauntless manner of the man, that he was a friend.

"Not with such traitors and rebels as ye, with whomever else I may hold!" returned the man.

At the instant, a bow was drawn, an arrow whizzed, and the imprudent vintner fell back from the casement.

"Break in the door!" said Tyler, "and let us see if the cellars of this unmannerly knave have any thing more to our liking than their master's speech."

There was no need to repeat the order—the door was smashed to splinters, and, in the rush to get at the cellars, several were thrown down, and trampled on. A large can, filled with wine, was handed to Tyler, and another to the galleyman, who, each quaffing a long draught, permitted the like indulgence to their followers; and then the word to march on was shouted by the chief. But now the smith perceived evidence of the folly he had been guilty of: the wine was too tempting to be left so soon—the vintner's house rang with execrations and tumult—and even among those who kept their station in the street, the dangerous liquid continued to circulate.

"This comes," said Tyler, enraged at such sudden disorder, "of letting folks taste of what they're not used to; but let them tipple on. By St. Nicholas! they may: I will wait for no man;" and snatching the banner of St. George from its half stupified bearer, and waving it in the air, he applied a small bugle to his lips, and at the blast, all whose reason was not entirely lost in their thirst, followed the smith from the scene of inebriety.

Their next halt was at the beginning of the Strand, opposite the princely mansion of the bishop of Chester. The gates were forced in, and the garden encircling the building filled with the commons, who, hissing and shouting, bade John Fordham come forth. When it was discovered that the bishop was not within its walls, the house was presently glowing in one bright sheet of flame. It was told to Tyler, while this was going on, that a body of the Essex men had marched on from Mile-end, and taking a northerly direction, had pillaged and destroyed many dwellings, and among others, that of the prior of Saint John of Jerusalem, at Highbury; while another division was rapidly advancing by the way of Holborn, to attack the palace of John of Gaunt at the Savoy.

"By St. Nicholas!" said Tyler, "they shan't have it all their own way there;" and the Kentish men made all haste to be the first to commence the work of destruction; but ere they had left the burning house, the dark body of the division of the Essex men was seen pouring into the Strand by the wall of the Convent garden.

Tyler and the other leaders, followed by hundreds, now rushed on to the palace;—the massive gates yielded to their blows, and the assailants, pouring in through the arched passages, ran along gallery and window, and through seemingly countless apartments. Yet, even amidst their eagerness to capture Lancaster, they paused a moment, casting glances of astonishment and pleasure at the beautifully inlaid cabinets, rich tapestries, and embroidered cushions, which everywhere met their gaze. The galleyman, however, was perhaps the only one among all the gazers who knew the value of the things he looked upon; and he could not repress a feeling of regret, as he glanced at the damask hangings, and the gold cords and fringes, and remembered that all these would be speedily feeding the flames. As he was thus occupied, and thinking what a fortune these articles would be to a peddling merchant, he saw Jack Straw in the act of whis-

pering in Harvey's ear (who, by some strange sort of moral attraction, was standing by his side), and he noticed them linger until the group they had accompanied passed on to the inspection of other apartments. Oakley then opened a door in a recess in the corridor, which, when they entered, they closed hastily after them.

"Master Tyler," said Wells, springing up to the chief, "they are boarding a prize yonder;" and he pointed to the half-concealed door.

"Have they got John of Gaunt?" vociferated the smith; but as he turned his eyes from the spot to which his attention had been directed, to his informant, the galleyman could not be distinguished among the group—for, in truth, he was rather solicitous to avoid any kind of contact with his old associates.

"Confound the unmannerly carle," muttered Tyler, as he rushed forward with his men to seek an explanation in the room itself. The door, however, resisted all their efforts; and this only strengthening their hasty suspicions respecting Lancaster, the stout polished oak was presently split asunder by their axes, and they forced an entrance into a small light apartment, furnished in a style of eastern luxury. From the carved ceiling were hanging the broken links of a gold chain; and on the soft crimson cushions of an ebony couch, and on the floor, were scattered the miscellaneous contents of an exquisite ivory cabinet.

"He has escaped us!" shouted Tyler and the others, as, after casting a rapid glance around the empty apartment, they darted through an open door on the other side. This led into a luxurious dressing-room, and this again into a sumptuous dormitory. If there were any outlet from this room, it was concealed by the splendid hangings, and the pursuers, after assuring themselves that no human being was within, returned to the dressing-room. The door of egress from this apartment was secured on the outside, and so, without a moment's delay, they had recourse to their former expedient, and the door was instantly hewn to splinters. On creeping through the aperture, and passing through a short passage, they found themselves in the gallery that ran round the hall. Here, chafing with disappointment, the pursuers had only to hope that they might, by chance, take the right scent, and were rushing along the gallery, when Tyler, casting his eyes below, and observing the galleyman cross the hall, hallooed to him; and then springing along the gallery, and down the spiral stairs, seized Wells rather unceremoniously, and upbraided him with conniving at the escape of Lancaster.

"Avast there! Master Tyler," said Wells, shaking off the gripe of the smith; "I know no more of Lancaster than yourself: I told you this morning he was on the borders—and so, how, in the name of all the saints, could he be here?—but I tell ye, there are some here who would rather lay hand upon John of Gaunt's gold than upon John of Gaunt's body!"

"They had better not come across me," replied the smith, comprehending the galleyman's hint; but still persisting in his skepticism, he resumed his search. But even the smith was, at length, compelled to admit that, whether Lancaster had escaped or not, it did not appear likely that he would be found;—and the order was given for firing the palace. At the same instant a leathern jack, covered all over with a thick quilting of blue satin, was held upon the point of a lance, and as many arrows shot at it as they would more willingly have aimed at the breast of its owner. The building was already smoking in fifty different places, and at some points the flames were already rising. Tyler, who had determined not to believe in Lancaster's absence, after lingering about the palace with the hope that the devouring element might force him from some hiding-place, accidentally found himself in the chapel close to the sanctuary, and just at the opportune mo-

ment to detect a sacrilegious hand removing a massive gold candlestick from the altar.

"Infidel! devil!" shouted Tyler, springing over the railing of the sanctuary, and raising his clenched fist: the candlestick fell from the grasp of the delinquent, and he reeled against the altar with the force of the blow. "What!" continued Tyler, aghast, "can it be Jack Straw!"

"Yes, it is," replied Oakley, fiercely, in some measure recovering from his confusion, and from the effects of the blow, "and, by the green-wax! a strange way you have of claiming acquaintance — what did you think, Tyler, I was going to do with the candlestick? Will not the commons have churches of their own, when they obtain their rights, and would it not be a triumph over Lancaster, to have these brave candlesticks gracing our altars."

Tyler had turned away while Black Jack was speaking, but suddenly stopping, turned abruptly round, and looking full at him —

"I'll tell you, Jack Straw," said he, "were it not for my respect for Father John, I would have every door of this chapel fastened up, and then the flames that are already crackling the painted windows yonder, would just give you time to say a paternoster and an ave, before they cheated the gibbet of its due! but, as it is, let *him* who put you over the Essex men look to you, but, by my faith," he added, stamping his foot against the pavement, and speaking quicker, "if you do not instantly leave this place, all the monks that ever told a bead shall not save you!"

It was yet possible for Oakley to feel shame, and it was not entirely with rage that his whole body at this moment trembled. He looked at the smith as he spoke, and half drew a dagger from his bosom, and an indifferent spectator, regarding the two — Oakley still standing on the upper step of the altar, and Tyler at a dozen paces down the centre aisle — would have thought that there could have existed but little odds between the physical power of the men; but Oakley, although he ground his teeth, and felt almost suffocated, had too much prudence to expose his gross enervated body to the muscular arm of the vigorous smith. Therefore, assuming an indignation of a very different character from his real feelings, he said, as he stepped from the altar into the nave of the chapel,

"I do not understand your language, Master Tyler — am not I a leader? — does not the prophet know me and trust me?"

"By St. Nicholas! the prophet does *not* know you! Do you think he would have trusted you, if he had thought you would have skulked into a chapel to steal the very candlesticks from the holy altar!"

An execration passed between Oakley's teeth — he sprang upon Tyler, and had not the smith dexterously raised his left arm and arrested the blow, Black Jack's dagger would have been buried in his bosom.

"That for ye, coward," said Tyler, striking him with the flat side of his bared weapon. Oakley aimed another thrust which was again turned aside, and the smith, now flinging down his sword, seized upon his right hand and wrenched the dagger from its grasp. After a short struggle, Oakley fell heavily on the pavement, with the blood streaming from his mouth and nostrils.

"Lie there, for a dog — to strike at a man with a dagger!" said Tyler, as he took up his sword, and muttering something about "if it was not for the sake of the prophet," strode hastily away. And there was little time for delay; the atmosphere of the place was becoming quite insupportable, and the flames were spreading with such rapidity, that the smith, half stupefied and scorching, had enough to do to escape from the mischief he had kindled.

That afternoon, Richard was standing on a turret of the fortress, looking at the column of flame which still rose brightly from Lancaster palace, even

above the heavy smoke and occasional sparklings which told elsewhere of the whereabouts of the incendiaries.

"Our cousin will have to crave hospitality, when he returns home," said Richard, addressing the Earl of Oxford, who stood beside him.

"The knaves have been merry on their march," replied Oxford. "Does your grace see the bonfires they have lit yonder?" and he pointed towards the north.

"By my faith, it is more than provoking to see the audacity of the kerns. Think you not," added Richard, after pausing a moment, "that if that monk was brought forth, and his head laid on a block, some terms might be made with the rebels. Do you see," continued the king, as they descended to the battlements, "they are bringing huge beams towards the drawbridge."

It indeed seemed evident that some bold measure was contemplated, and Richard's suggestion respecting the monk was about to be acted upon, with only a prudent hint from Sir Robert Hales not to provoke the commons to desperation, when De Boteler's page approached his master.

The baron was standing apart from the other nobles, scanning, with a gloomy countenance, the dark undulating mass below. Once he could have sworn that Stephen Holgrave stood upon the verge of the ditch before him, but if it was he, he stood but an instant, and then was lost amidst the multitude. This circumstance gave a new turn to De Boteler's meditations; he thought too of the monk of Winchcombe Abbey — this John Ball, who was styled the prophet; and it seemed to be no less true than strange, that the germ of all this wide-spreading disorder had sprung from his own soil. So much, in fact, was he absorbed in these ideas, that he actually started when his page, who had been for the space of a minute endeavouring to draw his attention by repeated obeisances, ventured to pronounce his name in rather a high key, as he presented to him an arrow which had been found sticking in the door-post of the building in which Father John was confined.

"And this was shot from the river?" asked De Boteler, as he received the arrow and unrolled a parchment wrapped around it.

"Yes, my lord."

"Tell Calverley to come hither directly."

The page withdrew, and De Boteler, after perusing the parchment, presented it to Richard. It ran thus: "A retainer of the Lord de Boteler will come, unarmed and alone, beneath the southern battlements, at ten o'clock. He is a leader of the commons, but, being touched with remorse, he will, if admitted before the king in council, disclose all the secrets of the rebels."

"Know you any retainer of yours who could have written this?"

"My steward, who approaches, can better answer the question, your highness," returned the baron.

The parchment being handed to Calverley, he instantly recognised the hand, and, in answer to De Boteler's question, replied —

"This is the handwriting of a retainer called Oakley."

"Do you know the man?"

"Yes, my lord."

Calverley then retired, and those whom the matter concerned withdrew to an apartment, and gave their opinions according to the view in which the thing appeared to them.

That it was a stratagem to gain entrance to the Tower, was the opinion of several, but, after much discussion, it was decided that the man should be admitted, and that the monk should be exhibited merely to intimidate the rebels, until the result of this promised communication should be known.

About ten, a small boat was observed to approach the southern walls of the fortress. A man stepped from it, and was permitted to ascend the terrace, and Calverley, who was standing there, challenged the stranger.

The steward clapped his hands, and immediately the bows of a hundred archers stationed around were unbent, and he addressed Oakley as follows :

"It was you who shot the arrow?"

"Yes."

"Are you a leader, Oakley?"

"I was a leader," returned Oakley, gloomily.

"It was well that I was here to recognise your writing."

"Where there is a will there is a way, steward, and I should have found means of getting revenge even if you had kept safe at Sudley."

"Is it for revenge, Oakley, or for gold?"

"I tell you Master Calverley, it is revenge," said Black Jack, stopping short, as they were crossing the court-yard, "it is revenge! When I joined the commons, I swore I would not betray them, and I would not — betray them for gold did you say? — listen — I had gold — aye gold enough, to have kept me an honest man all the days of my life, after this rising, and that — that blacksmith, who killed the baron's retainer —

"Turner! what of him?"

But Oakley went on without heeding the interruption. "What was it to the knave whether I or the flames had them — and to be cuffed and threatened! — but the gibbet shall not be cheated of *him*. Do you know they threw Harvey into the flames — I heard the shrieks of the wretch, but I could not help him, though I knew my treasure was burning with him! for I was crawling, all but suffocated, and seeking for an outlet towards the river. I heard the cry, but for an instant, and then nothing, through the long passage, but the rush and the roar of the flames."

"Then the gold you speak of was lost?"

"Yes, by the green wax! it was. If I had only been wise enough to have kept the bag myself, poor Harvey might have been alive, and I should not have done what I am going to do this night. No; — I should only have cursed the smith and forsworn the commons, and made the best of my way to where I could have turned the gold and the gems into hard coin. Is my Lord de Boteler here?"

"Yes."

"Then, Master Calverley, although, as I have said before, it is to revenge myself, you must tell the baron that the king must not expect to have my assistance in betraying the commons without paying for it."

"My lord will not see you but in the presence of the council."

"Not see me! then, by the green wax! I may be cheated; for one can hardly ask the king for money to his face."

"The baron has pledged himself that, if your intelligence and services are such as you hinted at, you may claim your own reward."

"May I? — then John Oakley will be no niggard," his countenance losing much of the gloomy ferocity it had been marked with. "But, steward," he added, as they walked through the building, "the smoke and the flame are even now in my throat; — you must give me wine, or I shall not be able to speak a word."

De Boteler was instantly acquainted with Oakley's arrival, and the council assembled, impressed with the importance of detaching so influential a leader from the commons. Indeed, energy had given place to indecision, at a moment that required prompt measures. Tyler had, but an hour before, sent an intimation, that, if the prophet was not released in twenty-four hours, the city would be fired, and the Tower assaulted: and, even at the moment when the members of the council were entering the chamber, the air was rent with the shouts of the commons on Tower-hill and Smithfield, as some skilful artizans among their body had nearly matured some machines for facilitating the attack. Symptoms of panic or indifference had

been also manifested among those who guarded the Tower. The strange stories whispered of Ball, his prophecies, and his calm bearing while confined in his dungeon, with his oft repeated assertions of being liberated by the commons, were calculated, in such an age, to fill their minds with the belief that he was, in truth, a prophet, and one whom it would be impiety to meddle with.

After Richard, surrounded by the lords, had taken his seat at the table, Black Jack was introduced by De Boteler as the writer of the scroll.

"You are a leader of the rebels?" interrogated Sudbury.

"I am, your grace," replied Oakley.

"Which division of the kerns do you command?"

"The commons of Essex."

"What! all?" interrupted Richard.

"My liege, I am leader of fifty thousand men."

"Then what is the design of this rising?" again asked Sudbury.

"To free the bond — to acquire land at a low rent — to be at liberty to buy and sell in all cities and towns, without toll or interruption; — and lastly, to obtain a pardon for this insurrection."

"By my faith!" said Sir Robert Hales, "these are bold demands, which the sword alone must decide."

"Peace! Sir Robert," said Sudbury. — "What have you to suggest which may benefit the realm, Sir Leader?" he continued.

"Ere I say more," said Oakley, falling on his knees before Richard, "I crave a general pardon, not only for myself as a leader in this rising, but for all other trespasses by me committed."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Richard, "the knave is wisely valiant! He has an especial care of his own neck. Rise — thou art pardoned."

"But my liege," continued Oakley, still kneeling, "there is one confined in this fortress for whom I would solicit freedom."

"To whom do you allude, knave?" asked Sudbury, with some surprise.

"To father John Ball."

"To father John Ball! to that son of Satan — that vile author of all this confusion. Be content with saving your own head."

"Then, my lord archbishop," said Oakley, rising, "if a hair of that monk's head is touched, I will not answer for the result. Wat Tyler, my lords, is a man of desperate purpose. He has sworn before the multitude, that, if the prophet is not freed before the twenty-four hours, the heads of all these noble peers around me shall answer for it. — Nay more —"

"Hold, kern," interrupted Richard, fiercely; "we despise the threat."

"But, my liege," persisted Jack Straw, "let the council consider the danger of the delay. I have reason to know, that those you reckon upon to oppose an entrance here are not to be trusted: the prophet has worked wonders, even within the fortress."

"How know you that?" asked Richard, with surprise.

"My liege, there are disciples of John Ball in the Tower — aye, even among the royal household!"

"'T is false!" returned Richard, angrily — "who are they? — confess! confess!"

"No, my liege — though I have renounced the confederates, I cannot betray them; but if the monk is freed, I will, at the risk of my head, quell the rising, without blood."

"How? — speak!" said Sudbury.

"My lord, you have heard the conditions, which have been drawn up by John Ball himself. I would humbly suggest, that charters of freedom should be granted under the royal hand and seal: if it so please you — they can be revoked at leisure. The Essex men will be content with these char-

ters and a general pardon — but the prophet must be first set at liberty: he abhors bloodshed, will curb this Tyler, and thus this formidable array may be dispersed. I would further suggest, that your highness, attended by a slight retinue, and unarmed, should repair to-morrow to Mile-end, where I shall have assembled the leaders, and will sound them on these points. The charters may then be read, and, my lords, you are aware, that even the royal franchise cannot destroy your right over the bondmen, without an act of parliament."

While Oakley was speaking, all eyes were fixed upon him with something of astonishment at advice that would not come amiss from the sagest among them.

"Retire," said Sudbury! "we shall consider the matter."

"My lords," said the wily prelate, in a solemn tone, "this man has anticipated my counsel. It may not be safe to meddle with this Ball for the present. The charters may be made out, and of course revoked hereafter; but I like not your grace perilling your person, alone and unguarded, among the kerns."

"My lord," said Richard, "we are resolved to meet these bold men, and hear what they have to say. Shall you attend us, my Lord of Canterbury?"

"I would fain be excused, with your highness's leave. A dignitary of holy church should not degrade his calling by communing with the scum of the land!"

"Then, my lord bishop, let who will stay, we go. My lords, will you attend your king?"

"To death, my liege," said De Boteler and the rest.

"Tis well — let this man be recalled."

"Tell the commons, that King Richard will see them to-morrow," said De Boteler.

"Then, my lord, the monk is to be freed?" asked Oakley.

"His life is spared till after the conference," said the treasurer; "his freedom depends upon the disbanding of the Essex men."

Oakley was then led forth from the council by De Boteler, who pledged himself that the monk should not be harmed; and, after receiving, from Calverley, a part of the stipulated reward, he retired from the fortress by the way he had entered.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Tower clock had just struck ten, and Father John was reading a Latin manuscript by the light of a small lamp, when the door of his prison opened, and the glare of a large wax-light, preceding a lady, almost dazzled his eyes. The torchbearer, placing the torch in a convenient position against the wall, retired, leaving the monk and the lady alone.

There was but one seat in the dungeon, so John Ball arose, and presenting his stool to his visiter, seated himself on the bundle of straw which composed his bed.

Isabella de Boteler placed the stool so that her own face might be in the shade, at the same time that the light played full upon that of the monk. They sat an instant silent; and as the baroness bent her eyes upon the father, she saw, in the deep marks on the forehead, and in the changed hue of his circling hair, that he had paid the price of strong excitement; but yet she almost marvelled if the placid countenance she now gazed upon could belong to one who had dared and done so much. At length she spoke.

"You know me, Father John?"

"Yes, lady."

"Know you why I have visited this cell?"

"It is not for me to speak of what is passing in the heart of another."

"Tell me, monk," asked Isabella, "did you see the multitude who filled the open space when you were led upon the battlements this afternoon?"

"I did, lady, and my heart rejoiced — even as a father at sight of his children!" a slight tinge passing over his cheek.

"You speak too boldly," said Isabella, with some impatience; "but if your eyes were gladdened with what they saw on Tower-hill to-day, they will not be gladdened at the things that will meet their glance to-morrow!" She hesitated, and then went on rather hurriedly: "When you are led forth again, the rebellious commons will be dispersed, and the block will be standing ready for your head!"

"Man is but dust, and a breath may blow him away. I was born, Lady de Boteler, but to die; and there is not a morning, since I have abided in this dungeon, but, as I have watched the first rays of light stream through yonder grating, I have thought, Shall my eyes behold the departing day! and, as well as a sinner may do, I prepared for my end. But, lady, are the thousands but as one man? — and think you that the spirit which has gone forth —"

"I tell you, Father John," interrupted Isabella, "that even at this moment a leader of the rebels is before the council — and ere to-morrow's sun shall set, the turbulent villeins will be either hanged or driven back — and you will be beheaded!"

"Is the betrayer a captive?" asked the monk; and he fixed an anxious searching glance on the baroness.

"No, the man came voluntarily —"

Isabella paused. The monk, however, did not reply; but she inferred, from a sort of quivering of the upper lip, that her information affected him more deeply than he chose to tell. She passed one hand across her forehead, and then, clasping them both, and resting them upon her knees, looked earnestly at John Ball, and said, impressively —

"The rebels are betrayed, and you are condemned; but, if you will hearken to my request, this hour shall free you from prison: — Will you, will you tell me of my lost child?"

"Lady," said the monk in a stern voice, "think you so meanly of John Ball, that he would do for a bribe what he would not do for justice' sake? The time was when ye might have known, but ye took not counsel —"

"Then he lives!" said Isabella, in a suppressed shriek; and she bent her head on her bosom, and covered her face with her hands.

For a minute she sat thus, and then slowly removing her hands, and raising up her pale and tearful face, said tremulously, and in so low a tone as to be scarcely audible, "My child, then, does live?"

"Baroness de Boteler, I said not that your child lives."

"Oh, Father John, torture me not so," said she, with hysterical eagerness. "Oh, tell me not that I have a living son, and then bid me look upon the grave. Oh, lead me to my child, or even give assurance that he lives, and you shall be freed; and if he whom I suspect did the deed, he shall be pardoned and enriched."

"The Baroness of Sudley," replied Father John, "does not know the poor Cistercian monk. Were the bolts withdrawn, and that door left swinging upon its hinges, I would not leave my prison until the voice of the people bade me come forth. And know ye not, lady, that with what measure ye mete to others, the same shall be meted to you again. Did ye deal out mercy to Edith Holgrave? Did ye deal mercifully by Stephen, when ye gave him bondage as a reward for true faith — and then stripes and a

prison? And, as for me, — and ye expect that the bondman's son is to set a pattern of mercy and forgiveness to the noble and the free?"

"I was right, then," said the baroness, in a more composed tone — "it was Stephen Holgrave who did the deed; but father, if you spurn my offers, at least answer me yes or no to one question — Am I the mother of a living son?"

It was in vain, however, that Isabella promised, implored, and even threatened; John Ball would not vouchsafe another reply, and the baroness, at length, wearied and indignant, arose, turned abruptly from the monk, and summoning her attendants, hastened forth to her own apartment, and there, throwing herself in a chair, wept and sobbed until her heart was in a measure relieved.

That night was a period of strong excitement within and without the Tower. Without, the moonlight displayed an immense mass of dark bodies stretched on the ground, and slumbering in the open air; while others, of more active minds, moved to and fro, like evil spirits in the night. Beyond, in the adjacent streets, occasionally rose the drunken shouts of rioters, or the shrieks of some unhappy foreigner, who was slaughtered by the ignorant and ferocious multitude for the crime of being unable to speak English. Within the Tower there was as little of repose; there were the fears of many noble hearts, lest the renegade leader might not be as influential as he vaunted, concealed beneath the semblance of contemptuous pride or affected defiance; — then there were the sanguine hopes of the youthful Richard; — the maternal fears of his mother; — the anxious feelings of the baroness; — the troubled thoughts and misgivings of John Ball; — and the strange whisperings among the men-at-arms and archers, who all "did quail in stomach," we may suppose, at the novel combination of a prophet in prison, and an armed populace besieging the fortress.

The next morning Richard, without breastplate or helmet, but simply attired in a saffron-coloured tunic and an azure mantle lined with ermine (on which opened pea-shells were wrought in their natural green, but with the peas represented by large pearls), a cap of azure velvet, edged also with ermine, and with no other weapon but a small dagger in the girdle of his tunic, prepared himself to meet his rebellious subjects. The idea of letting down the drawbridge, and passing by it from the Tower, was too imprudent a thing to be thought of, and Richard, therefore, attended by De Boteler, Oxford, Warwick, Sir Aubrey de Vere, and a few others, were just about taking water, in order to pass a little way down the river, and then proceed to Mile-end on horseback, when the princess Joan, attended by the Lady Warwick, joined the party, and intimated her intention of accompanying her son.

It was to little purpose that Richard expostulated; the fair Joan was resolved to share in whatever perils might befall her son. As they approached Mile-end, the princess started at the deafening clamour which arose from the multitude; some shouting for Richard as they saw him advance, and others vociferating as loudly that all should hold their peace until they knew what the king would grant. When the tumult had in some degree subsided, Sir Aubrey de Vere and Sir Robert Knowles rode forward in advance of the king, and approaching Jack Straw, who was also on horseback: —

"Sir Leader," said De Vere, "we have come at the king's command to make known to these assembled commons his grace's pleasure. Are ye willing to listen to the royal clemency?"

Leicester was not among the leaders, for, disgusted with Oakley's tardiness, he had about an hour before passed the city gates with a large body, to join Tyler. Jack Straw, therefore, had not him to contend with, and a flattering plausible speech in a few minutes procured attention to the following charter: —

"Richard, king of England and of France, doth greatly thank his good commons, because they so greatly desire to see and hold him for their king; and doth pardon them all manner of trespasses, misprisons, and felonies done before this time; and willeth and commandeth, from henceforth, that every one hasten to his own dwelling, and set down all his grievances in writing, and send it unto him, and he will, by advice of his lawful lords and good council, provide such remedy as shall be profitable to him, to them, and to the whole realm."

"Ye may tell his grace," cried Rugge, "that I for one will never return to my dwelling until a charter is granted to make all cities free to buy and sell in."

"And shall we go back to our homes to be bondmen again?" burst in a wild cry from thousands.

At this moment a messenger rode up to Oakley, and, putting a letter into his hands, instantly retired.

"A message from the prophet!" cried Black Jack, as he glanced over the writing, and then read aloud, "John Ball greeteth John Straw, John Leicester, Ralph Rugge, and the other leaders, and also all the true commons assembled at Mile-end, and commandeth them that they listen to the voice of their anointed king, and hasten back to their own homes; and John Ball, who is now freed, will obtain from the royal hand the charter of freedom, for the bond, and the redress of all the grievances that weigh down the free."

There was much murmuring and discontent at the tenor of this epistle; and but little disposition manifested to obey the mandate: but the example of their principal leader, Jack Straw, who instantly, as in obedience to the prophet's command, divested himself of his sword, and presented it to Sir Aubrey de Vere, intimating his submission to the king, occasioned a sort of general panic, or rather, a distrust of their own powers. This, added to the specious and equivocal promises of Richard, who now approached, and the persuasive eloquence of Oakley, operated so far on the credulous multitude, that the king, amidst a universal shout of "Long live the king of the commons," turned his horse's head towards London, rejoicing in his heart that so far the rebels were dispersed.

But in this instance his exultation was of short duration, for one, who had leaped from the battlements of the Tower unheeded, and had swam along the river unharmed, approached Sir Robert Knowles, who was riding something in advance of the party, and with his saturated apparel bearing testimony to his assertions, announced the stunning intelligence that the Tower was at that moment in the possession of the commons. This brave defender of the fortress was Calverley.

There was a sudden halt at this intelligence, and many an exclamation at the presumption of the insolent commons. However, after some consultation, it was deemed most prudent to come as little as possible in collision with the rebels, but, under countenance of the mayor, to pass through the city, and then, as the most probable security, claim the hospitality of the worthy abbot of Westminster.

We shall leave King Richard with the fair Joan of Kent and the nobles, to pursue their journey to Westminster, while we give some idea of the means by which the commons, so soon after the departure of the king, became masters of the Tower. The galleyman had been a resident in London for some years; and it will of course be inferred, that during this time he must have formed many acquaintances, which circumstance, indeed, had been of much avail in gaining admittance into the city, and now turned to as good account in effecting an entrance into the Tower.

It was about midnight that Wells, who had been thinking a great deal of the probability of gaining access to the fortress, went to the smith's quar-

ters, and proposed to attempt an entrance. Tyler commended his devotion ; and the galleyman, provided with a rope, to which an iron hook was affixed, and a flask or two of wine, dropped unobserved into the water. He swam on as softly as possible beneath the wall, and in the shadow cast by the moonlight. There was one part where he observed that an angle of the building cast a broad shade on the parapet ; and here, without a moment's hesitation, he stopped, and throwing up the rope, the hook caught. Though encumbered by his wet apparel, he climbed up with the agility of a boy ; but the instant his figure appeared above the wall, two men with drawn swords sprung forward.

"Hold there ! I have brought ye a drop of wine."

At the first sound of his voice the weapons were lowered. "It was well that ye spoke, master vintner," said the men, taking each a flask of wine and draining its contents.

It so happened, that these men had a strong sympathy for the commons, and besides this, they had been much wrought upon by the stories, whether true or false, circulated through the Tower respecting Ball ; and it did not require much persuasion to gain them over in assisting Well's project. A female domestic belonging to the lieutenant, a sweetheart of one of those men, secreted Wells in an apartment in her master's house, and contrived to purloin the keys of the gates after Richard's departure. The galleyman, aided by a few daring disciples of the prophet, with whom he found means to communicate through the same female instrumentality, surprised the few who guarded the gate and drawbridge : and the blast of a horn was the signal for the smith to advance. So suddenly was this feat accomplished, that the men-at-arms, who were scattered up and down the fortress, had not time to seize their weapons or oppose the thousands who, headed by Tyler and Holgrave, rushed forward, and entered the Tower. With exulting shouts the conquerors took possession of the building. Some made strict search for the members of the council ; others, with blows and taunts, employed themselves in divesting the panic-struck soldiers of their arms ; and others, the more numerous of the intruders, were intent only on forcing the wine-cellars, regardless of the threats and buffets of their leaders. But above all this wild clamour, arose the voice of Tyler, who strode rapidly on, like some demon of power, striking and reviling friend or foe who was unable to point out where the prophet was confined.

At length one of the keepers was seized, who conducted Tyler and Holgrave to his cell.

"Father John, you are free—the Tower is ours !" exclaimed Holgrave, flinging wide the massive door.

"And I am freed ? and by the bond ?" exclaimed the monk.

"Aye, Father John, you are free," said Tyler. "We have found you at last ; but by St. Nicholas ! we have had a long search. Hah !" as he glanced on the monk, "have the knaves chained you. Bear him forth, men of Kent — Wat Tyler himself will strike off those irons."

The monk was then conducted to the outer door of the prison. It would be in vain to paint the frantic joy of those without. Deafening shouts of "The prophet is free !" passed from mouth to mouth, and then came the rush to obtain a prayer or benediction.

"Back, men of Kent — back," vociferated Tyler ; — and then arose the long wild shout as Tyler freed the monk from the last link of his bonds.

Just then a movement among the people was observed, and a man, hastily forcing his way through the yielding ranks, announced to the astonished smith, and yet more astonished monk, that Oakley had, by command of the prophet, made terms with the king, and that even now the Essex men had broke up their camp, and were marching homewards.

"And is this thy counsel, Father John ?" said Tyler, reproachfully :

"but, by St. Nicholas! this robber of the high altar shall not depart scatheless. Kentish men! — my horse, my horse!" and he stamped his armed heels upon the pavement.

"Wat Tyler," returned the monk, sternly, "this is not my counsel — this, then, is the traitor! — but perhaps he has obtained the charters!"

"The charters, Father John," responded Tyler, with a sneer: "aye, by St. Nicholas! he has got his charters in good broad pieces, I'll warrant! — My horse, Kentish men, I say!"

"Confound the whole rising, if he escapes me! Stephen Holgrave! as the father does n't like me to go, tell Leicester to take a chosen body of the Kentish men; and, mark ye, he must catch that fiend, and bring him to the Tower, dead or alive!"

"Stephen Holgrave," said the monk, "let not one hair of his head be meddled with! And now, Wat Tyler, I enjoin thee to clear the fortress of those who have forgotten their duty — but slay not. I now go to the chapel, where I shall remain a short time in prayer." The monk then waved his hand, and drew his cowl closely over his brow, to hide from his gaze the evidences of debauchery he encountered at every step in his way to the chapel. The gutters and kennels ran with wine, and some, for want of vessels, were lying prostrate, lapping up the flowing beverage — some, entirely overpowered, were stretched across the doorways, and in the court-yards, serving as seats to others, who were, with wild oaths, passing round the goblet.

"And this is the first-fruits of liberty," muttered the monk — "but no good can be had unalloyed with evil."

The chapel, during all the tumult, was unnoticed, probably less through respect for the place, than from neglect; and thither those who had most to fear from the people had hastened, expecting safety from the sacredness of the spot. Among the rest, or rather leading the way, went Sudbury, who was shortly afterwards joined by the constable and treasurer, on perceiving the commons in possession of the Tower.

In order to impress the place with a still greater degree of awe, Sudbury, with his attendant priests, had robed themselves, and commenced vespers.

Father John entered the chapel, and prostrating himself thrice at the door, arose, and silently advanced to the foot of the altar. Here he recognised the archbishop, and, checking his emotions, knelt in prayer, unnoticed till the service had concluded. In the midst of the sacred song, terror was depicted, more strongly than piety, in the faces of all the worshippers, save Sudbury; he seemed calm, except, indeed, when a shout from without caused an indignant frown to darken his brow.

The monk was at length perceived, for the treasurer, on raising his eyes, met the glance of Father John. "My lord bishop," said he, "yonder stands the monk, John Ball!"

"And why not, my lord treasurer?" said Father John, in a clear, full voice, his face, before so pale, glowing, and his frame trembling so much that he grasped a pillar for support; "this temple is open to all — the just as well as the unjust."

"Darest thou, rash man, to defile the holy place? — why art thou not in thy prison?" said Sudbury, whose glance fell proudly and scornfully on the monk.

"Simon Sudbury," answered Ball, with a look of equal defiance, and still deeper scorn — "my dungeon doors obeyed the spirit of the free; and God alone can judge who is defiled, or who is pure —"

"Away, degraded priest!" answered Sudbury, fiercely, and he raised his arm, and pointed towards the door.

"Simon Sudbury," retorted the monk, "if, as thou sayest, I am degraded, to thee no authority is due — If I am still a chosen one of the Lord, me-

thinks I am free to enter and worship in his temple: but," he continued, elevating his tones to their fullest compass, "whether I am a priest or no priest, yet *here* I am powerful, and, proud prelate, *I*, in my turn, command *thee* hence!"

"And is this the way, misguided zealot?" cried Sudbury — "is this the way that *you* preach *peace*? What hast thou done with the royal Richard?"

"The royal Richard," returned Father John, exultingly, "is but king of the *commons*; but the royal Richard is well served, he added, sarcastically, "by Simon Sudbury and the nobles, who leave their prince, in his peril, to hide them in holes and sanctuaries!"

The treasurer turned pale, and hung his head.

"Aye, Sir Treasurer, thou hast reason to sink thy head! Thy odious poll-tax has mingled vengeance — nay, blood, — with the cry of the bond."

"It is thou, foul spirit!" cried Sudbury, descending a step from the altar — "It is thou who hast stimulated the thirst for blood, and hast brought the royal prerogative and holy church into contempt — away! ere, with my own hands, I drive thee hence!"

"And away, ill-starred prelate! — away (as I prophecy) to thy doom!" returned the monk, advancing a step towards Sudbury; "aye — aye — away! and —"

The monk did not finish the sentence, for the door of the chapel was for a moment darkened with the shadows of two men, who were just entering; and Father John, wrapping his cloak around him, walked rapidly towards them, and, with a single adjuration of "Friend Tyler, spare!" issued forth from the chapel.

Tyler, in his haste to seize the archbishop, stumbled over a lance which one of those who had fled with the prelate had dropped.

"Confound the hand that dropped thee!" muttered the smith, as he sprang on his feet. "John Kirkby, is not that Sudbury yonder? It is he, by St. Nicholas! Seize that babbling old man! — he with the mitre!" They had now arrived at the altar.

"Not one step farther, kern!" cried the treasurer, seizing his sword, and placing himself in front of Sudbury.

A shriek from the women who had clustered round the treasurer, made matters worse; for, attracted by the noise, the chapel was instantly filled with armed men.

"Sir Treasurer, think you to scare him who leads the Kentish men? Kirkby, drag the antichrist from the altar!"

Kirkby advanced a few paces, but a glance from Sudbury seemed to unnerve him, and he stood for a moment irresolute.

"There, chicken-hearted carle!" cried the smith, felling Kirkby to the ground with his mailed hand — "there, dog! — Wat Tyler must be obeyed! And now, Simon Sudbury, take off that blessed mitre, which ill befits thee, and come forth; for, by my faith and the blessed St. Nicholas! in one hour hence, thy head shall be stuck on London Bridge, wrapped up in the hood of thine own mantle!" And with this, Tyler placed his foot on the first step of the altar.

Another shriek from the terrified females but seemed to augment his fury; and the treasurer, after a few vain parries, fell stunned and bleeding by a powerful blow of the smith's axe.

"Lie there, dog! — there goes one of the accursed council!" and, springing up the step with a giant grasp, he seized the mitred chancellor by the neck, and dragged him into the centre of the church.

"Hold, impious man!" said the undaunted prelate; "the noblest and gentlest heart in England lies bleeding and gasping on the high altar in defence of the Lord's anointed; but even the blood of the anointed shall stain the sanctuary ere *he* quail before man in his master's temple!"

"By St. Nicholas! then you shall be cheated of dying here," said Tyler; and, snatching the mitre from the gray locks it covered, he threw it to Holgrave. "There, Stephen, that shall soon sit upon a worthier head: and now, Sir Priest, or Sir Prelate, be quick with an ave—for the block is ready and the axe sharp. And you, Kirkby (who sullenly stood by), mind and lift up that knave yonder," pointing to the treasurer; "for, by St. Nicholas! he, too, shall die!" and the treasurer, faint, and almost lifeless, was, with Sudbury, borne away to Tower-hill.

John Ball, in the mean time, had passed on from the chapel, heedless of the greetings that met him at every step, and of the riot and confusion that would, at another time, have called forth his rebuke. At length, as he passed the royal apartment, he heard sounds that seemed to recall him to himself—they were the shrieks of women! Throwing back his cowl, and casting an indignant glance at Kirkby, who had just emerged from the building, he said—

"What dost thou here, John Kirkby, and why these screams?"

Kirkby muttered something of the council.

"And darest thou, John Kirkby, a leader of the people—darest thou be the foremost to set at naught my commands? I repent me of my endeavours to right the oppressed, for, alas! they have been like stray sheep without the care of the shepherd!—and now, that the shepherd has sought and is among them, they heed not his voice."

But the shrieks were again repeated, and Father John commanding Kirkby to follow, passed rapidly through the apartments, where every thing presented the trace of the spoiler. In many of them were stretched, or rather huddled together, peasants in the last stage of inebriety, some on the beds, and others on the carpets; and the shattered garniture of this abode of Richard and his fair mother, served but to mark its recent costliness and splendour.

The monk groaned deeply as he observed four or five men hewing with axes at a door which had resisted their first efforts to burst open; while two others were struggling with a man who seemed to be disputing their entrance; and a few paces from these lay, on a richly-worked counterpane, an infant, whose shrill cries mingled with the strife.

The flashing eye and indignant rebuke of the monk, on beholding this scene, unnerved the fear-stricken peasants.

"It is the prophet himself!" burst from the lips of the men, dropping their weapons and looking abashed.

"Aye, it is he whom you say is the prophet," cried Father John, "and accursed, say I, be the house-breakers!" his eye fell on Ralph Rugge. "What, another of the chosen!" he added, with a withering glance. "All, all are unworthy—my heart is sick!" and he turned away and covered his face with his hands.

"Father John, you have come in good time," said the galleyman, who now approached the monk, and who was he that had been contesting with the two men; "for, good father, if my ears serve me rightly, within that berth is the Lady de Boteler!"

The monk started.

"And where is her lord?"

"I know not, unless he be with the king at Mile-end."

"Lady de Boteler," cried the monk, "if thou art within, come forth!" and Isabella, at his voice, at once threw open the door.

"Lady," said Ball, who, in a low voice, had exchanged a few words with Wells, "here thou art no longer safe. Conduct this lady, my friend, to the abbey of Westminster," addressing Wells, "and encounter not those who might, unchecked by me, commit farther outrage. Take a boat from the water-side—that way is yet open. Farewell, lady, I must hence;—for

even Simon Sudbury, who made John Ball what he is now, may be in peril, and it is for the Lord alone to smite. — *I seek not the brand to right me !*"

The idea of Sudbury's danger had been confirmed by the behaviour of those whom his presence had arrested in guilt; and the monk, whose sympathies were thus awakened, hastened away, and gained the courtyard. Here his ears were assailed by a loud shout, which was repeated thrice, and which, he conjectured, proceeded from Tower-hill.

The monk hurried to the northern battlements, and stood, for an instant, gazing intently on the confusion which filled the vast area before him. At one point, and towards the centre, he observed a circle formed of some mounted commons, and he perceived a man in the midst in a kneeling posture. His voice now arose deep and startling as he exclaimed, "Wat Tyler, I adjure thee, touch not the prelate — touch not the Lord's anointed ! Forbear ! forbear !" and then, with an agility which, since his boyhood, he had not probably before exerted, he descended the platform, hurried through the fortress, crossed the moat, and then striding rapidly through the people, who made way as he approached, stood in the centre of that circle towards which his fears had impelled him.

A glance informed Father John that vengeance was swifter in the race than mercy, and his eye now fiercely sought for the guilty author of the drama. He stood a few paces to the right, leaning on the instrument of crime, and his eyes riveted on the prophet. Upon his dark countenance was marked triumph and agitation, for he feared the storm which he expected was now to burst upon him. But whether it was the spectacle which the monk's first gaze encountered, or that indignation, too deep for utterance, overpowered his energies, cannot be said ; but, after regarding Tyler with a look which seemed to combine every thing of horror and disgust, Father John turned away, and was quickly lost in the multitude.

Those who witnessed this brief interview saw enough to indicate, in that glance cast on their leader, the monk's displeasure at the deed ; and Tyler himself well understood the silent rebuke, for, turning to Kirkby, he said, in a bitter, though subdued tone, —

"John Kirkby, the father is angry, and this is all one gets for one's pains. Now that the mitre waits for his head, he will not put it on ; — and did not that traitor Jack Straw often say the father wished for Sudbury's place ; and though I hate bishops, I would not mind seeing him one. But, by St. Nicholas ! he added fiercely, no more bishops for Wat Tyler — and —"

The smith was here interrupted by a messenger from Richard, with a proclamation for the commons to meet him the next morning in Smithfield, when they should have every thing they required.

"Ye may tell King Richard that the commons will meet him ; but mind ye, and tell him to have no lords, nor men of law, nor any of that brood of bishops with him, if he wishes them to wear their heads ; — mind ye that, Sir Pursuivant."

Tyler then retired, but first strictly enjoining, on pain of death, that the bodies of the archbishop and treasurer should not be removed or interred.

When night came, and Father John did not return, the feeling became general that, disgusted with the spectacle of the morning, he had abandoned the cause ; and it became apparent, even to Tyler himself, that some decisive step must at once be taken, before those whom the monk's eloquence had aroused and united, and his promises inspired with a confidence of success, should, deprived of his guidance, return home in despair.

The smith was as great an enthusiast for the freedom of the bond as the monk himself ; but his mode of obtaining it did not coincide with the peaceful bent of the father. Tyler's plan was bold and sanguinary, — the monk's, intimidation without violence ; and energetic and accustomed as

was the smith to act on his own impulses, yet, even in his fiercest moods, he willingly yielded obedience to the monk's suggestions. Indeed, he had long been accustomed to pay that deference which Father John's mildness had, as it were, extorted; and the circumstance of their first connexion, from the liberation of Ball from the dungeon of Sudley to the present period, had so increased his affection and veneration, that now, deprived of this pillar of support, he felt a loneliness and dejection which nothing around could dispel.

The morning was just breaking; and the moon shone full and bright on the surrounding buildings, on the trees, on the tents that marked the lodgment of the leaders, and on the groups that lay tentless on the ground, buried in profound sleep. All within the boundary of the rude encampment were reposing in the confidence of power, without guard or centinel, save one, whose eyelids closed not. Alone, in the corner of a tent, which stood in the centre of the encampment, sat Tyler, whom the moonbeams revealed, as they streamed through a rent in the canvass. His right hand clenched, and his elbow resting against the side of the tent, supported his head; and in his left he held a small gold crucifix, on which he was gazing, not with a countenance on which pity might be traced, but rather a look in which sorrow and despair seemed blended.

"Aye, it was *his* gift," said he. "However bad, Father John, you may think Wat Turner, he cares for this holy relic more than the life his mother gave him. And was it not because he thought to place you above them all that Sudbury lies on Tower-hill? And did he not take off that mitre with his own hands?—and did not his heart beat joyfully when he saw you come, that he might put it on your head? And now you leave him with the work half done. And the poor commons, too, must go back again to be kicked and cuffed, and to bear the load heavier than before. Ay, Father John—and did he not snatch you from the stripes and the bolt?—and were not his hands red with blood that blessed night?—and was he not forced to fly like a felon, and take this accursed name of Tyler?" Here his agitation increased, and his articulation became indistinct and husky; he started up, thrust the crucifix into his bosom, and paced the tent for a few minutes in silence; then looked upon the sleeping mass, and resumed, as he re-entered the tent—

"Ay, ye may soon sleep your last sleep. They will have at ye in the morning; for the proud barons are gathering their might; but, by St. Nicholas! I may do something yet. Yes, there will be more blood—I see it;—I must have an order to hehead the lords; and then, if Richard will be king of the commons, and no more lords or bondage, Father John himself could not wish for more."

He, at length, became somewhat composed, and threw himself upon the floor, to get a few hours' rest.

At an early hour, he prepared to redeem his pledge of meeting the king; and the commons, as they arrived, commenced forming in order of battle along the west side of Smithfield. When marshalled, they presented the appearance of a wedge, broad behind and gradually diminishing to the front; the banner of St. George was in the centre of the line, supported by the men-at-arms; while on either side were disposed the slingers and archers.

In this order, they awaited the king; and, in the interim, Tyler employed himself in riding up and down the ranks, exhorting the people to be firm, and to take care that they should not be cheated out of their rights by king or priest. Indeed, his whole demeanour supported the night's resolve, and vindicated a determination of purpose which imparted itself to the thousands who cheered him at every step in his progress.

We must premise, before describing the coming interview, that the Tower was again occupied by Richard. A sudden attack during the night sur-

prised those left in possession ; and here the assiduity of the lords had collected a strong force, by means of the communication from the river ; and they determined on giving battle to the commons, should they refuse to return home on obtaining the charters. A large body of the citizens had, by previous concert, thrown themselves unobserved into the priory of Bartholomew, in order to operate, under William Walworth, with those in the Tower.

Precisely at ten o'clock, Richard, without pomp or circumstance, issued from the Tower, attended only by De Boteler, Warwick, and a few others, Sir John Newton bearing the sword of state. He was apparelled in the same manner as when he appeared at Mile-end, when he went forth to meet the Essex men, and with that unsuspecting confidence that marked his early years, entered Smithfield with as much gayety as if he were going to a banquet. Sir Robert Knowles and his men-at-arms had orders to follow at some distance, but on no account to show themselves until there might be occasion. After surveying the formidable array, which stretched far away into the fields, and listening to De Boteler's remarks on their clever arrangement, either for attack or defence, —

"By my faith! my lord," said Richard eagerly, "these knaves will not be trifled with ; but lo! who have we here?" as he perceived a single horseman gallop forward from the centre.

"My liege," said Newton, as the horseman neared the royal train, "that man is Wat Tyler."

"And if my eyes do not mislead me," said De Boteler, looking searchingly on Tyler, "I know the graceless kern."

Newton then pushed forward to open the conference, and said, as he joined the smith —

"My lord, the king, wishes to hear you on the alleged grievances."

"And who are you, knave, that dare ride in presence of Wat Tyler?"

"I am Sir John Newton, the king's sword-bearer," returned Newton, proudly.

"Then, by St. Nicholas! none shall ride here but Richard and myself. Come down, braggart," and he seized the bridle of Newton's horse.

Richard now rode up, perceiving the peril of his attendant.

"And what would ye have, Wat Tyler?" asked Richard, in a conciliatory tone.

"Sir King, I would first have this knave well whipped for riding in my presence."

"But what would ye have put in your own charter, Wat?" again asked Richard, endeavouring to draw the smith's attention from Newton.

Tyler, however, was more intent on unhorsing the sword-bearer, than listening to the king, for he now grasped Newton by the shoulder, and endeavoured to drag him from his horse.

During this altercation, a small body of archers had advanced from the lines to within bow-shot of the disputants.

Richard observed the movement, and beckoned to Sir John to dismount, who, choking with mortification, surrendered the animal to a man whom Tyler had beckoned to approach.

"And that dagger, too, surly knave," said the smith. "How dare ye come here armed. Go to, thou art a knave!"

Richard could contain himself no longer. "Thou liest! Sir Leader," said he, reining back his charger, whose bridle had come in contact with the head of the smith's horse.

"The dagger, knave," muttered Tyler, still intent on humbling the proud sword-bearer, and raising his axe in a menacing attitude.

The dagger, like the horse, was then relinquished, and Tyler, with a glance of triumph, turned to Richard, and continued —

"King Richard, I'll now tell you what the commons want: first, I want a commission to behead all the lords, and those who began the poll-tax — I would have no more lords nor lordships, nor lawyers, nor bondage; and I would have you king of the commons — and now Sir King, be quick with the charter, for, by St. Nicholas! I shall not eat or drink till every mother's son of those yonder can go and come, when and where they will; aye, and be as proud as the proudest of ye."

"These are bold demands, Wat Tyler," returned Richard, his cheek glowing with indignation, "and more, by my faith, than we shall listen to."

Tyler, during the colloquy, had seized his axe, and though it was not raised above his saddle-bow, yet the convulsive motion of the hand as it grasped the weapon, might seem to indicate danger to the young king. Richard was now surrounded by his retinue, among whom was William Walworth, the lord mayor, who had crossed over from the priory on perceiving his peril.

"Sir Leader," cried the mayor, boiling with rage, and approaching Tyler, "ride not so close to his grace; it ill becomes such as you to ride or speak so in the king's presence."

"Ha! and do ye say so?" returned Tyler, elevating his arm; "take ye that for your insolence:" but the blow, which would have deprived the worthy citizens of their sturdy chief, was arrested, ere it descended, by Warwick, who seized the uplifted weapon from behind, and the next moment the smith received a stunning blow from William Walworth's mace; then, as the reins dropped from his hands, a thrust from De Boteler's sword ended the cares of one who, doubtless, had he lived at a later period, might, in the cause for which he bled, have been a Tell or a Hofer.

A thousand spears, and as many shafts, prepared to avenge his fall, and an instant more of indecision, and Richard would have been spared the humiliation of after years; but a bold inspiration at this critical moment, hurried him fearlessly forward into the midst of the commons.

"What, my lieges!" he exclaimed, with a smile of confidence, "are ye angry that your leader is slain? Richard of England shall supply his place — follow me to the field, and ye shall have what ye desire!"

And, incredible as it may seem, the lances were lowered, the bows relaxed, and those who so lately had vowed to live or die with Tyler, followed the king to St. George's fields, rending the air with cries of "Long live King Richard!"

The men-at-arms, headed by Sir Robert Knowles, and the citizens, under Walworth, hurried after the commons, and when the charter had been granted, and the people were dispersing, suddenly and treacherously fell upon them.

Unprepared for such an attack, and now no longer formidable, the insurgents, panic-struck, fled on all sides; and, after a brief struggle, many of the leaders were cut down or secured. Numbers of the people perished, and Richard once more entered the Tower in triumph.

It is almost useless to add, that the charters were soon after revoked, and thus failed the first struggle of the British helots.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the commons, trusting to a deceitful promise, had lost that unity which could alone render them formidable, it was no matter of difficulty to secure Holgrave, as he rushed forward to revenge Tyler's death. Besides his being a leader, a reward from the baron was offered for his capture; and

it was to little purpose that he fought and struggled against a body which attacked him on every side; he was overpowered, and thrown into a cell in St. Bartholomew's priory, from which, when the tumult had ceased, he was removed, and, at the baron's request, delivered over to him for punishment.

This unexpected consummation wrought upon Holgrave so much, that with the sullen determination which had marked his character on previous occasions, he resolved not to answer any questions whatever. We should have premised, that the galleyman had given Holgrave a solemn promise, that if any ill befell him, Margaret should be cared for like his own wife. This was a solace to him, as he thought over his mother's death, and his own evil destiny. But there was another solace, that, strange as it may appear to some minds, arose from the thought, that whatever might befall him, the baron's heir would share in it. At first, when he had been removed to Sudley, mild measures were resorted to. He was lodged in a comfortable apartment, fed plentifully, and promised his freedom with whatever reward he might claim, if he would but speak satisfactorily as to the lost child. When this failed, he was sent to the keep, and for a week black bread and cold water were the only articles of aliment supplied; and then the *peine forte et dure* was resorted to. But though his face was swollen, and of a livid purple hue, and the eyes seemed starting from their sockets at the pressure on his chest, as he lay with his limbs extended on the earth, yet would he not speak the word which would have released him from all this suffering. The extreme punishment, however, of adding weights until nature could sustain no more, was delayed from day to day. The baroness had twice given birth to children who had survived but a few hours; the third had lived, but it was a daughter; and as she dwelt upon the approaching extinction of their noble line, she dared not permit the order to be given that might deprive her of all hope. Day after day were the weights pressing and stifling, and forcing the blood that still crept through his veins to his extremities, and distending the hands and feet with a feeling of agony. But though the pressure was each time removed when the leech pronounced the prisoner exhausted, yet it appeared that repetition, though slow, would effect the work as surely as if the punishment had been in the first instance applied in all its legal rigour.

Calverley, although he feigned to exert himself, would not in reality seek for Margaret while Holgrave lived; but Black Jack, who, after eluding the pursuit of Leicester, returned to Sudley, and domesticated himself in the castle under the hope of supplanting Calverley, had, of course, no motive for deception; and the baron's offer of gold was too tempting not to call forth all his ingenuity. But neither he, nor fifty other mercenaries who were out upon the scent, could discover the track.

Holgrave had been about a month a prisoner, when Sir Robert Knowles came to Sudley, to announce that Richard would honour the castle with his presence on the following day, and on the next proceed on to Gloucester to hold a parliament. As they were sitting at the evening banquet —

"My Lord de Boteler," said Sir Robert Knowles, "do you remember the circumstance of a certain vassal of yours being accused of shooting a buck?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"His name, I think, was Stephen Holgrave — the same Holgrave that was among the rebels, is it not?"

"The same man, Sir Robert."

"So I thought," returned the knight; "but, however, that must not weigh now. Have you a vassal named John Byles?"

Calverley, who was handing a replenished goblet to Sir Robert's page,

started so much at this interrogatory, that the wine-cup dropped from his hands.

"Yes," replied De Boteler.

"Has that man a wife named Mary?"

"He has," quickly replied Isabella, unable to divine the cause of such singular inquiries.

"Then, my lord, I request that John Byles and his wife be instantly brought before us; and with your leave, no one passes from this hall except my page, till they appear," continued Sir Robert, as he observed a movement in the steward, indicating an intention to retire.

"Martin," he added to his page, "go you to one of the servitors in the court-yard, and tell him to accompany you to this John Byles; you know how to keep your counsel, and remember, that the Baron de Boteler commands John Byles and his wife to come instantly to the castle. Do you not, my lord?"

"Yes, if it is your pleasure," said the baron, with a smile.

"I perceive," resumed Sir Robert, as the page withdrew, "that my conduct surprises you; but I cannot yet explain."

The surprise, indeed, was not confined to the individuals who sat at the upper table; gradually, as the purport of Sir Robert's words was whispered about, did the hall become hushed, and the eyes of those who sat below, and of those who were in attendance, were fixed with a kind of painful expectation upon the baron's guest. The domestics, however, were not so entirely engrossed by Sir Robert as to be wholly unmindful of Calverley; and significant nods and smiles were exchanged, as they saw, or fancied they saw, evidences of extreme agitation in the steward. After a few minutes' expectation, John Byles and his wife were ushered in by the page.

Sir Robert looked inquisitively at the yeoman and his wife, but more particularly at Mary; and, as if he read her character in her countenance, said something in a low voice to De Boteler, who instantly ordered Byles to retire into the anti-room till called for. The door being closed, the baron, at Sir Robert's request, bade Mary Byles approach. Mary, upon entering the hall, had looked a very comely sort of personage; but as misgivings gave place to the flattered confidence which had given firmness to her step as she entered, she now presented a totally different aspect.

"Come closer to the table, Mary Byles," said Sir Robert, addressing her in an authoritative, but yet in a familiar tone—"come nearer; and with my Lord de Boteler's leave, I shall ask you a few questions." Mary curtsied, and rather hesitatingly approached the foot of the table.

"Now, Mary Byles, I wish you to tell me what kind of a night it was when John Byles and your servitor, Sam, went into my Lord de Boteler's chase to kill a buck?"

Mary was of a florid complexion; but at this unexpected question, she stood before the searching look of the baron with her cheeks as colourless as if she had been struck by the angel of death.

"Are you striving to recollect?" asked Sir Robert, without any symptoms of anger.

"I don't understand your lordship," at length tremblingly articulated Mary.

"Do you not?—I think I speak plain language—however, if you forget the appearance of the night when the buck was shot, perhaps you can tell me on what day of the week your man, Sam, managed to get into Holgrave's cottage, and steal the shafts from the quiver over the fireplace?"

Up to this period the hall had been as still as if Sir Robert and Mary were its only occupants; but at this point a murmur arose, as if, by the power of magic, each was in a moment convinced of Holgrave's innocence.

"Peace!" vociferated De Boteler — "Answer, woman!" he continued, stamping his foot.

Mary saw that she had nothing to do but deny, and this she did most stoutly.

"Wretch!" said De Boteler, "why do you not tell the truth?"

But Mary was not to be intimidated, and Sir Robert, perceiving he could gain nothing from her in this way, arose, and approaching the baroness, who had been looking on with much interest, said, softly, "My Lady de Boteler, I wish to put a question or two to this woman, but as what I shall ask must be distressing to you, perhaps you had better retire."

"No — no," replied Isabella, "do not fear for me? — This is so strange, I must hear what you have to say."

"Prepare yourself, then, lady," said Sir Robert, and he resumed his seat.

"Mary Byles," he began, "I have one more question to ask you. How many drops of that fatal potion was it that Edith Holgrave told you to give my lord's infant?"

A smothered sob from Isabella now added to Mary's perplexity, her cheeks and temples became flushed, and, with a bewildered look, she said —

"I do n't know — I do n't remember anything about it!"

"Now, Mary Byles," resumed Sir Robert, speaking more decisively than he had yet spoken, "I insist upon your giving me a true answer to this — Did you not say to your husband, on the evening you returned from Gloucester, after Edith's trial, 'Edith's death lies like murder on my conscience; oh, I wish I had n't taken Calverley's advice, but had told my lady of the mistake?'"

"Calverley!" repeated De Boteler, "what did you say of Calverley? What did Calverley advise you to?"

Mary had sustained herself wonderfully well, considering how unprepared she had been, but this last interrogatory of Sir Robert, conjuring up, as it were, Edith's ghost, was too much; she struggled against nature for an instant, and then, giving an hysterical shriek, fell back in strong convulsions.

Two of the domestics were ordered to bear her from the hall; and, when there was again silence, Sir Robert said, "That woman is too artful to betray herself! Let Byles be called in?"

The yeoman re-entered, and Sir Robert began, in a voice so familiar, that Byles was thrown off his guard. "John Byles, how came you to be so foolish as to fall in the ravine the night you and Sam went to shoot the buck?"

"It was n't I who fell in, my lord — it was —"

"— Sam — who fell in," said Sir Robert, as he saw Byles hesitate to proceed farther. "You are right, yeoman, it was Sam, and you helped him out — but I desire you to tell me, if you had succeeded in conveying the buck to Holgrave's shed, how many nobles Master Calverley was to have given you?"

Byles looked at his interrogator as if he had been the evil one himself; but he had committed himself, so he thought it the wiser way to say nothing.

"Why do you not answer, man?" continued Sir Robert, at the same time giving De Boteler a glance, intimating that he wished not to be interrupted. "I know how many the steward promised you, but I desire to know how much you received."

"I neither gave nor promised him anything," said Calverley, approaching the table under the impression of giving a tone to what Byles should say.

"Thou liest, kern!" said Sir Robert, rising suddenly, and in a voice

which made Calverley start back. "My Lord de Boteler, I accuse your steward of bribing yonder caitiff to slay a buck with shafts stolen from Stephen Holgrave, and then to lay the slaughtered animal in Holgrave's barn. I also accuse him of prevailing upon that man's wife to lay the crime of murder upon an innocent woman! And, my lord, if you will hold a court to-morrow morning, one whom I found in the Tower will prove my charges, and the wronged shall be righted."

"Calverley done all this!" said the baron, in a tone of incredulity; but then, as the steward's persevering hostility to Holgrave flashed across his mind, it seemed to bring conviction.

The hall at this moment presented a strange spectacle. Every individual except Isabella and Oakley were on their feet. The domestics, though not venturing to proceed beyond their own table, were bending their heads eagerly forward, to look more particularly at Calverley than at Byles, as if this charge of crime had developed some new feature in the man. Byles, with his hale complexion, changed to the paleness of a corpse, stood trembling at the foot of the table, at the head of which was standing De Boteler, with a flushed countenance and his eyes fixed upon Calverley, with such a look, that if the glance of an eye could have killed, the steward would have been consumed on the spot. There was an instant of silence, or at least there was nothing but an indistinct murmur from the lower end of the hall; and Calverley, who seemed strangely composed, took advantage of the moment to say, though without raising his eyes —

"My lord, whatever charges Sir Robert Knowles may have against me, I am ready to meet them."

"Peace, wretch!" said De Boteler, choking with passion. "Here, let these plotters be confined separately till the morrow — and, Luke," he added, to the old steward, "let you and John Oakley go instantly to Holgrave, and see him removed from the keep, and put him into a warm bed — and take ye a flask of wine and pour some down his throat — and see that the leech attend him. He now turned to Isabella and strove to dispel from her mind the sad thoughts that the last half hour had called up, but it was not, as the baron imagined, the remembrance of her murdered child alone which had sent a paleness to her cheek, and a tremor through her frame; it was rather the thought that through judging rashly she had been an accessory to the death of one who perhaps deserved reward rather than punishment.

The next morning the hall was again converted into a court of justice. De Boteler took his seat, and the eager vassals crowded in to hear the expected justification of Stephen Holgrave. Calverley, as being a party accused, was of course incapacitated from filling the accustomed situation in the court; and as old Luke was too infirm, Oakley was selected. Black Jack had begun to be very calculating — a portion of the money he had received in London had already disappeared in his secret debauchery. The bribe was not so large as he had been led to expect, and he had sense enough to know that his habits were not adapted for turning what remained to any account. The stewardship of Sudley was so easy and profitable! The very thought of it was delightful — and as nothing had as yet transpired to criminate him, he accepted of the temporary dignity with the most sanguine hopes that Calverley's delinquencies might fix him in it permanently.

But lo! when Calverley's prison door was opened, for the purpose of conducting him to the hall, he was not to be found! It was no purpose that the baron stormed and threatened, no trace of Calverley could be discovered; but John Byles was brought forward, and, upon being confronted with his own servitor, and promised that if he made a full disclosure, the punishment of the crime should be remitted, he confessed all with which

the reader was made acquainted in the early part of the tale. The question of poisoning was then put, but Byles had cunning enough to remember that no one was privy to this but Calverley, and as it might peril Mary's life, he stoutly denied all knowledge of the matter. Mary Byles, who had also been kept in durance, was then introduced, but she was more collected than on the preceding evening, and would admit nothing. She knew not anything of the buck — and she could say nothing more respecting the poisoning than she had already said at Gloucester, and the supposition of Edith's innocence was compelled to rest upon the servitor's oath, who swore that he had heard Mary say, on the evening she returned from Gloucester, what Sir Robert had repeated. This, coupled with the circumstance that, together with the poisoning, Mary had denied what her husband had admitted, and what could not have happened without her knowledge, brought sufficiently conclusive evidence to convince every one that Edith had died a martyr to Mary's cruelty or carelessness.

As the baron had promised not to punish, Byles and his wife were dismissed unharmed; but from that hour forward, they were regarded by all as under ban, and therefore shunned as much as possible. We should premise, however, that before Byles was permitted to leave the hall, Stephen Holgrave was led in, that he might receive a public acquittal. When Holgrave entered, supported by one of the servitors, and, appearing unable to stand, was seated on a stool, Sir Robert Knowles, who had more than once taken a strong interest in him, started up, and was about to make some observation; but recollecting himself, he resumed his seat, and remained silent. De Boteler himself felt a glow of shame and a qualm of conscience, as he looked upon the white, swollen face, and bent and shrunken form of one who had, in the moment of peril, sprung, with the vigour and ferocity of the tiger, between him and death. Holgrave had not been informed why the agonizing punishment had been remitted, nor why he had been placed in a comfortable bed, and every attention paid him: and he only suspected that, perceiving severity could effect nothing, they were unwilling to lose their victim, and wished again to try the effect of a milder treatment. His suspicions seemed confirmed, when, upon an order from De Boteler, a page approached, and presented him with a cup of wine. Although, as we have said, suspecting the motive of so much indulgence, he drank the wine, and then, looking round the hall, wondered why there had been such a gathering of the vassals, and why their looks were bent upon him with such friendly interest, and why words of pity and triumph were murmured amongst them; then he wondered why Jack Straw was sitting in Calverley's place, and what fault John Byles and his wife had committed, that they stood there like criminals. These thoughts, however, had scarcely passed through his mind, when the baron addressed him in a gentle tone.

"Stephen Holgrave," said he, "you remember, some seven years since, being accused of shooting a buck in my chase. It is not to repeat the charge that I sent for you, but, before this noble sir and these vassals, publicly to acquit you of the base deed. He who stole your arrows, and shot the animal, stands there!" and he pointed towards Byles. — "And he who bribed him to be a thief and a liar, aware of his guilt, has fled, and has for the present escaped my vengeance. And now, Holgrave, it repents me that I dealt so hardly by your mother, for, as I hope to die a Christian's death, I believe she died innocent."

Sir Robert had remarked the sudden flush, and then the death-like paleness, which had passed over Holgrave's face, as his glance fixed upon Byles; and perceiving that, as his dead mother was spoken of, he became excessively agitated, he ordered his page to carry him another cup of wine; and the two criminals being removed, De Boteler continued,

"Approach, Stephen Holgrave."

Holgrave arose, and though he trembled, excitement had lent him such strength, that he walked up to the baron without assistance. De Boteler then, taking Holgrave's right hand, pushed him, with a gentle violence, away, at the same instant repeating, in a loud voice, "Away! thou art free!" and then added, "Hear, all ye assembled, that I, Roland de Boteler, release Stephen Holgrave from his bondage, and that from henceforth, he oweth me no allegiance, except what is due as a vassal in chivalry."

And now the vassals, who had hitherto kept in tolerable order, upon seeing Holgrave again a free man, set up such a joyful shout, that the approach of the royal guest was not known until the portals were thrown open, and Richard, leaping familiarly upon the arm of the Earl of Oxford, entered the hall.

"You hold a court to-day, my Lord de Boteler," said Richard, as the baron hurried forward between the ranks of the shrinking vassals to welcome the monarch.

Words of courteous gratulation were uttered by De Boteler, as he led his visitor to a splendid chair which had been prepared for him, and presented, on his knee, a cup of spiced wine. During this, Isabella and Lady Ann Knowles had entered the hall, and, after being presented to the king, Lady Ann whispered to Sir Robert, who requested that Holgrave, who was about to depart, although no longer a prisoner, should remain in the castle, at least for that day. Holgrave promised acquiescence, and the hall being cleared of the tenantry, Richard and the attendant lords, whom he and his favourite had by half an hour outstripped, presently sat down to a splendid banquet.

During their ride, Robert de Vere had acquainted Richard with the singular disappearance of his sister's infant son, and with the suspicions she entertained respecting Holgrave. That love of the marvellous, which seems inherent in youth, was awakened in all its vigour in the young king; and, as the repast concluded, he heard, with a feeling of pleasure, De Boteler ask permission to interrogate a vassal in his presence.

"Please your highness," continued the baron, "the man is exceedingly stubborn. We suspect him of having stolen our child, but nothing has as yet been able to extract a confession, though, perhaps, your highness's presence may have some effect."

The domestics at the lower table had withdrawn, and Oakley, who was continued in his functions as steward, was ordered to see that Holgrave attended.

"Stephen Holgrave," said De Boteler, as the former approached, "I have sent for you, to certify, in this presence, that I restore to you the land you were once possessed of, with its stock and crops; and whatever you may need besides shall be given you from the stores of the castle:—it is only giving you back your own, Stephen. But it is his grace's pleasure, that now, as your late offences are forgiven, you make a full disclosure of whatever you know respecting my stolen child."

All eyes were now riveted upon Holgrave; and a mind less firm would have trembled and hesitated until the whole truth was either revealed or suspected; but Holgrave, although prepared for such interrogatories, did not appear disposed to give an immediate reply. He had lost the confidence in fair speeches he once possessed. His freedom had been torn from him, and, though now pronounced free, what surety had he that the morrow might not again behold him a bond-slave? Thoughts like these could easily be detected in the contraction of the brow, and compression of the lips; and there might also have been detected, together with a resentment for the suspicions which had been cast upon his mother, a determination not to subject himself to the chances of farther persecution by acknowledging the

wrong he had done. At this moment, when the colour was receding from De Boteler's cheek, and when every respiration which Isabella drew was distinctly audible, a figure, which had stood unnoticed behind one of the statues, moved on, and, ascending one step of the elevation, threw back a cloak from his shoulders and a cowl from his head, revealing the strongly marked countenance and imposing figure of John Ball! Several of the attendants sprang forward to secure him; but a motion from De Boteler restrained their zeal, and, without noticing the action of the menials, the monk, regarding those only who sat round the table, addressed them in that deep, solemn tone peculiar to him.

"Start not," said he, "John Ball is not come to harm you; — he never harmed any to whom God gave the breath of life, — neither did he counsel the blood which has been spilt. A price is set upon his head — but think ye the homeless wanderer fears to die? Baron of Sudley, I have come thus far to tell you what I told you once before — that if ye will swear to set free the bondmen of Sudley, the child you mourn as dead shall be restored to you!"

"Oh, swear, Roland! swear!" said Isabella, starting from her seat, and, forgetful of all save her own intense feelings, she clasped her hands on her husband's shoulder.

"I do swear," said De Boteler, taking a crucifix from the monk, who extended one towards him, and kneeling before Richard; "I do swear, upon this blessed cross, and before my liege lord, that if my child is restored to me, so that I can claim him as my own, I will release every bondman within this manor, and that, from thenceforth, there shall be no more bondage in the barony of Sudley."

"Stephen, will ye restore the child?"

"I will," replied Holgrave, with softened feelings and a brightening countenance, "the child, my lord, shall be given up to you."

"He shall be given up," repeated the monk; and then, clasping his hands upon his bosom, he descended the steps, strode through the hall, and, in less than a minute, reappeared, leading in Margaret and the child, and followed by the galleyman.

Although, from the growth of the boy thus introduced, it might be judged he was about eight years, yet there was that sparkling vivacity, and that lightness of lip and eye which belong to an earlier age; and, as the wandering glance of the dark eye, and the smile of the red lip, met De Boteler's gaze, a tumultuous throbbing in his bosom told him that the child was indeed his own.

Isabella rose, and attempted to approach the boy — but the body was not able to bear the fervour of the spirit. Her heart sickened, the light faded from her eyes, and she sank back in the arms of the sympathizing Lady Knowles.

"That boy is yours, my lord," said Sir Robert Knowles, "let who will be the mother!"

"Peace, profane jester!" said the monk. "Baron of Sudley, do you believe that this is the son thy lady mourned?"

"I do believe," returned the baron, in a more subdued voice than mortal had ever heard from him before; and he approached the child, who was nestling close to Margaret, and looking around with an abashed but inquisitive countenance.

"My Lord de Boteler," said Holgrave, drawing the child almost forcibly from Margaret, "as I hope that my mother is a saint in heaven, the child is yours. I was a bondman — was motherless — childless — and I thought it would be no crime to make you, too, desolate!"

De Boteler looked at Holgrave as he spoke, but did not reply; but, plac-

ing his hand upon the full shoulder that rose above the boy's tunic, he bent his head down and kissed the child's forehead.

"The child is exceedingly like you!" remarked Richard.

"There is a resemblance, my lord," said Oxford: "but it is not likenesses nor assertions that will satisfy me—I require proof!"

"And proof you shall have," replied the monk. "Holgrave, declare how you obtained the child!"

Isabella, who had recovered her consciousness, and who now, with almost convulsive ecstasy, was embracing the child, cast an angry glance at her brother, as if she feared that some discrepancy in the proof might bring her right to claim him in question. De Boteler, however, did not appear displeased, but merely said, "Holgrave, you have not declared how you obtained the child."

"If it please you, my lord, when I was a boy, I was one morning rubbing down one of the late lord's horses for the servitor, whose duty it was to do it, when, all on a sudden, as I was stooping down to wipe the horse's feet, I saw the wall at the back of one of the stalls open, and out came the old baron. He looked round, but fortunately, or it may be unfortunately for him who is now lord, he did not see me."

"And you discovered where the secret opening led?"

"Yes—with all the curiosity of a boy, I afterwards found that the secret door led by some long dark steps to the bed-chamber of the old lord!"

"Did you mention your discovery to any one?"

"To no one, until after I had stolen the child—and then I told all to Father John."

"This story," remarked the Earl of Oxford, "requires proof as much as any thing else."

"You shall receive that of your own eyes," said Holgrave, "if it please you to accompany me;" and Richard, expressing a wish to witness every thing connected with the strange discovery, arose, and with De Boteler, Oxford, and Sir Robert Knowles, proceeded, as we have before described, to the bed-chamber. "From that bed, my lord," said Holgrave to De Boteler, "I took the child—it slept soundly—I crept down these steps—it was a dark night—and I got home without being seen!"

"This is not satisfactory proof," said Oxford.

"My lord, I have more to show you," resumed Holgrave.

They then descended to the stabling, and, followed by many inquisitive eyes, went on to Holgrave's cottage.

It was uninhabited, but the door was fastened, and Holgrave, forcing it open, led the way into the deserted abode. A chill came over him as he removed the chest; but taking up a shovel from a corner, where he himself had thrown it, he prepared to remove the clay. He hesitated for a moment, and then began his task;—he had dug about a foot deep, when, raising up a slip of wood about one foot broad and two in length, the perfect form of an infant, lying beneath, caused those who were looking silently on to utter an exclamation.

"Poor babe! it was a sad night I laid ye there," said Holgrave, bending over the grave, and looking earnestly at the little corpse; and then kneeling down, he attempted to raise one of the hands, but it dropped crumbling from his touch.

Holgrave, although he had exerted himself much during the last hour, was extremely weak; and this little circumstance affected him so deeply that he started on his feet, and, to hide the weakness of tears, turned away his head from those who were gazing upon him.

"I was a man, and I felt as a father," said Holgrave, turning again and looking at De Boteler, "and yet I stole your child, and dug that grave, and

with my own hands laid in my little one ; — and why did I do it ? Because I had determined that your child should wear the bondage you had given to me."

"This seems strange language from a bondman," said Richard, aside, to Oxford.

"The man has an obstinate spirit, your grace," returned the earl.

"De Boteler," said Sir Robert Knowles, "this bondage should never have been."

"Was I more than man, that I could tell the traitor Calverley deceived me?" impatiently returned the baron, as he felt, though not choosing to acknowledge it, that he had done wrong when he insisted on the bondage.

During this brief colloquy, Holgrave had again bent over the grave, and had taken up the box in which were deposited the articles that had been on the young De Boteler. Sir Robert, mistaking his motive, observed, "You must not think of removing the babe, Holgrave. This hut is but of little worth — you can throw it down, and bring a priest to say a prayer over the spot ; and then the grave will be as good as if it were in a church-yard."

Holgrave bent his head in acknowledgment to the knight ; and, placing the box under his arm, observed, "I hid these, lest they should be witness against me ; and now, if it please ye, noble sirs, to come back to the hall, I will restore them to my lady."

When the yeoman had returned to the castle, and presented the box to Isabella, the evidences it contained, in the dress and crucifix, were so conclusive, that the Earl of Oxford gave a kiss of welcome to the little Ralph.

"Baron of Sudley," said John Ball, "do you acknowledge that child as your son?"

"I do, monk, and I will fulfil my vow. Stephen Holgrave, to you I give the charge of collecting all my bondmen ; — see that they are assembled here to-morrow morning. They shall be freed ; and from henceforth, as I vowed, there shall be no more bondage in Sudley ; and, by my faith ! I believe I shall be better served by freemen than serfs."

"And, my Lord de Boteler, we feel much inclined to follow your example," said Richard. "The shire of Hereford is our royal patrimony — have ye a scribe here who can draw up a charter?"

Oakley was called upon, and desired to prepare an instrument, to the effect of freeing the bondmen of Hereford.

John Ball, who had looked on and listened with a deep interest, now approached the king, and knelt before him.

"The work that I strove for has begun, and it will finish ; but mine eyes will not live to see that day. From the hour that blood was shed I forsook the cause ; but I hid myself from the snares that were laid for me ; — for I said, Surely the light shall yet rise up in darkness ! and it has risen ; and it will grow brighter and brighter : — but John Ball's task is done, and he gives himself up to the death that awaits him."

De Boteler said something in a low tone to Richard, who turned to the monk.

"Retire !" said he, "we shall consider of your punishment."

As the monk withdrew, Oakley, who had retired, for the purpose of transcribing the charter, re-entered ; and the instrument being presented to Richard, received the royal signature. While this was being done, Oakley, under the impression that the affording a proof of Calverley's guilt, more tangible in its nature than mere assertions, could not possibly injure himself, and might turn to his permanent advantage, approached De Boteler, and, producing the prohibitory writ, —

"Please you, my lord," said he, "while searching among Thomas Calverley's writings for parchment, I discovered this."

"Discovered this among my steward's writings!" said the baron, as, biting his lip with vexation, he spread open the parchment on the table.

"Why, my Lord de Boteler," said Richard, taking up the writ, and glancing over the characters, "this is a prohibitory writ from the chancery! Where was this found?"

"My liege, in a private box in the steward's room, which, it seems, he had forgotten to lock," replied Oakley, with that propriety which he knew how to assume.

"The galleyman had stood in the hall, a silent but delighted spectator of all we have detailed. His heart yearned to grasp Holgrave's hand, and tell him how much he rejoiced in his freedom; but he dared not presume so far until the yeoman should have been dismissed. Besides, his thoughts were bent upon another object: as Richard raised the parchment for perusal, the seals attracted his attention, and he instantly recognised it as one he had observed Calverley drop in Gloucester, at the time of Edith's trial; but as he saw the ungracious look of the baron cast on Black Jack, he thought he would not irritate him further by mentioning it: yet, stepping forward as Oakley ceased, he said—

"Please your noble grace, that man lies. I found that parchment in a hostelry-yard at Gloucester, six years ago—I know it by the seals; and that John Oakley told me it was an old lease of no use, and so I gave it to him."

"And who are you, varlet?" said Richard, evidently more amused than offended, as he expected some fresh incident to grow out of this affair.

"Please your grace," replied Wells, encouraged by the king's manner, "I am a vintner in the city of London, and I came down to Sudley with Stephen Holgrave's wife, to see what could be done for her husband."

"By my faith! my Lord de Boteler, your hall seems a fitting place to act miracles in," said Richard, laughing.

"There have, indeed, been strange things done here to-day, my liege," replied De Boteler, smiling, but at heart annoyed at the thoughtless observation.

"Oxford," said Richard, "ask the knave if he have any more disclosures to make."

"Please you, my lord," said Wells, "I have only to say again, that John Oakley did not find this writing in the castle, and that he is a traitorous liar, and that I here challenge him to mortal combat."

"Retire, kerns!" said De Boteler, glancing with anger at Oakley and the galleyman, "and settle your vile feuds as ye may. Disturb not this noble presence longer."

"Be not angry, my Lord of Sudley: we request you to ask yonder varlet why he calls his fellow such hard names?"

"Please you, my lord," said Wells, nothing daunted, "did not John Oakley get Stephen Holgrave from the forest of Dean?"

"He did," answered De Boteler, who now remembered Wells as he who had assisted Isabella.

"Then, my lord, I call that man a liar, because he said he found the parchment in the steward's room; and I call him a traitor and a liar, because he got Stephen Holgrave out of the forest of Dean, by saying, that of his own good will he helped to lay his mother in a church-yard, when he was paid in good broad pieces for doing the work."

Holgrave, weak as he was, and forgetful even of the royal presence, sprang upon Oakley. The sight of the writ that would have saved his mother, almost maddened him. He did not exactly comprehend what had been said about the writ; but it seemed, that Oakley was in some measure

connected with this, and the sudden conviction, that he was, indeed, the betrayer, gave him such a frantic energy, that Black Jack's face grew still blacker beneath his grasp, and he would have dashed him to the ground, had not the baron risen and commanded Holgrave to loose his hold.

"I think," said Sir Robert Knowles, who saw that it was only under the influence of strong feeling that Holgrave could at present be a match for Oakley — "I think it would be better that this retainer accept the vintner's challenge; and should he worst him, then he and Holgrave can settle their quarrel, when a few days shall have given him more strength. This, despite of Holgrave's assurances that his strength was undiminished, was decided upon, and the galleyman and Oakley were directed to hold themselves in readiness to try the strength of their weapons on the morrow. They were then ordered to withdraw — Oakley and the galleyman to be lodged that night in the retainer's court, and Holgrave to tell over all he felt to the affectionate Margaret, who, for the present, at Isabella's request, was to occupy an apartment in the castle.

The more Oakley thought of the challenge he had been compelled to accept, the less relish he felt to engage in it. Even should he conquer his strong-knit antagonist, he must have to fight over again with the vindictive Holgrave; and he cursed the folly which had induced him to produce the writ. However, he had found a golden treasure in Calverley's room: and as he lay tossing on his sleepless bed, he resolved to take an opportunity, during the bustle of the next morning, to leave the castle. And, indeed, during the bustle of the next morning, an individual of much more consequence than Black Jack might have escaped unheeded.

The incidents of the previous day had caused a strong sensation, not only at Sudley and Winchcombe, but in all the immediate neighbourhood. The presence of a king; the recovery of an heir; and the unheard-of circumstance of giving freedom to the serfs of a whole county, were things well calculated to attract crowds to the castle: and then there were the feasting, and the rejoicings which were to gladden the hearts of all who chose to partake.

The gentle class, and the most respectable portion of the tenantry, prognosticated only evil from this all-advised proceeding. As they looked on, and saw the bondman and nief, with animated countenances, pouring into the hall, and beheld De Boteler, in the presence of the king and the nobles, give freedom to all who approached him, and order that from henceforth they should hold what land they possessed by copy of court-roll, they wondered how far this unprecedented innovation would extend, and how people were to get their land cultivated, if the peasant was allowed to go where he liked, and work as he pleased.

When the last bondman was freed, John Ball, who had stood looking on with devouring eyes, knelt down, and raising up a cheek suffused with the crimson of high-wrought feeling, and eyes glistening and radiant, ejaculated, in a scarcely audible voice,

"Now will my soul depart in peace, since mine eyes have beheld this day! — now will my spirit rejoice, since thou hast had compassion on them that were in fetters, and hast released the children of the bond!" Then rising, and extending his clasped hands towards De Boteler, he said, in a louder tone, "May the Lord add blessings upon thee and thy children! May length of days be thy portion, and mayest thou dwell for ever in the house of the Lord." Then approaching Holgrave, he continued — "Farewell, Stephen! The clemency of the king has saved my life, and the voice of the anointed priest hath proved me cleansed of the leper spot — but I must now be a dweller in a strange land. Tell Margaret that we may not meet again; but surely, if the prayers of a brother can aught

avail, mine shall be offered at the footstool of the Highest for her. I could not bid her adieu. Bless thee, Stephen, and bless her, and fare thee well!" He then pressed Holgrave's hand.

"Nay, Father John," said Holgrave, with emotion, "we must not part so."

It was to no purpose that the monk requested, and then commanded, that he should be permitted to pursue his journey alone. Stephen insisted upon accompanying him out of Gloucestershire, and Father John, to avoid contention, feigned to defer his departure; but when the tables were spread, and the domestics and vassals had sat down to the feast, Margaret, who had been seeking the monk about the castle, looked and looked again among them all, and at length had to weep over the certainty that she should never more behold her brother. Nor did she; for John Ball did not long survive his exile. On the second anniversary of the bondman's freedom, his own spirit was freed, and his body rested in the cemetery of the monastery of Cistercium, in Burgundy.

But to return. When the ceremony of enfranchisement was fairly over, there arose the cry for the combat, and great was the general disappointment, when, upon the galleyman's standing forth prepared for the encounter, no Oakley could be found. "He has skulked off to the craven Calverley, I'll warrant," said one. "Aye, aye, as sure as the sun shines, they are sworn brothers," said another: "they think more of saving their heads than sparing their heels. "Did ye ever know one who could read and write, who didn't know how to take care of his carcass," said another, with a sagacious nod. But though these good folks were all very shrewd, they did not happen to fall upon the truth, which was simply this, that as Black Jack was watching an opportunity to escape, without observation, he happened to see the cloak and cowl the monk had thrown off when first appearing in the hall, lying in a corner of the court-yard, where it had been carelessly placed by one of those whose business it was to keep the hall in order. It instantly occurred to him that this might be of use, and contriving to remove the cloak, he put it on, and, thus disguised, succeeded in leaving Sudley; but though disguises had so often befriended him, it proved fatal in this instance, for, upon taking a northerly direction, as one where he was least likely to be known, he was recognised as a leader of the commons, and his monkish dress inducing a suspicion of his being John Ball (the monk's pardon not being known), Oakley, although swearing by every thing sacred that he was no monk, was hanged without form of trial, at St. Alban's, as one who had stirred up the bondmen to insurrection.

Little more remains to be said. De Boteler, upon discovering that Byles held Holgrave's land by virtue of the mortgage transferred by the usurer to Calverley, pronounced, in the most summary way, the whole thing illegal. Byles was dispossessed, and the farm, now the largest in the manor, returned to Holgrave, who thus, like old Job, became the possessor of greater wealth after his misfortunes than he had enjoyed before.

When Holgrave's strength was re-established, he waged battle with Byles to prove the yeoman's guilt and his mother's innocence. Byles was no craven, but he was vanquished and mortally wounded, and when death was upon him, confessed the whole transaction. Mary, with her children, fled on the instant; and, some few years after, she was seen by Merritt, who had again become a peaceful artizan, begging alms in London.

Isabella, although, of course, never acknowledging her share in the writ, yet, as some atonement, gave a large benefaction to Hailes Abbey, on condition that a certain number of masses should be offered up for Edith.

The little Ralph grew up with a strong predilection for the sea, contracted, it was often suspected, by the strange stories he had heard the galley-

man repeat; and it is upon record, that Ralph De Boteler, Baron of Sudley, was the first high admiral of England. The young heir always evinced a strong affection for Margaret; so much so, indeed, as sometimes to raise a suspicion in the baroness that her son loved his foster-mother better than herself.

We must not forget Bridget Turner, who was so affected at the death of her husband, and perhaps, too, at the failure of the rising, that she took a journey on foot from Maidstone to Sudley, on purpose to reproach Holgrave with having been the cause of her husband's death. Margaret strove to tranquillize her unhappy feelings, and Holgrave endeavoured to convince her that, although Turner's removal from Sudley might be attributed to him, his connexion with the rising was his own act. And at length Bridget, finding that she was paid more attention by Margaret and Holgrave than she had received even from her own son, took up her permanent abode with them; and sometimes, when she could get the ear of an old neighbour, and talk of former times, and tell what her poor husband had done for Holgrave, when he was a bondman, she felt almost as happy as she had ever been.

About twenty years after this, Margaret, who had become a full, comely dame, and was by many thought better-looking now than in her youth, was one day bustling about her kitchen, for on the morrow her eldest son, who had accompanied the Lord Ralph on a naval expedition, was expected to bring home, from the galleyman's, in London, a counterpart of the pretty little Lucy. She was busy preparing the ingredients for some sweet dish, when one of Holgrave's labourers came in, and requested her to go to his hut directly, for an old man, who seemed dying, desired much to see her. Providing herself with a little wine, Margaret hastened to the cottage; and here, on a straw bed, lay a man with gray hairs hanging about his shoulders, and with a face so emaciated, and a hand so skeleton-like, that she almost shuddered as she looked. The invalid motioned the man to withdraw, and then, fixing his black eyes, that appeared gifted with an intense — an unnatural brilliance, upon Margaret, who seemed fascinated by the gaze, he said in a tremulous voice, —

"Margaret, do you know me?"

"Know you! — know you!" she repeated, starting from the seat she had taken beside him, and retreating a few steps.

"Do not fly me, Margaret. I cannot harm you — I never could have harmed you, — Do you not know me?"

"Surely," said Margaret, trembling from head to foot — "surely it cannot be —"

"I see you have a misgiving that it is Thomas Calverley — it is he! But be seated, Margaret, and listen to the last words I shall ever breathe in mortal ear."

Margaret was so shocked and overpowered, that she obeyed.

"Margaret," said the dying man, as he raised himself a little from his bed, "I know not why I sent for you, or why I dragged my weary limbs from beyond the sea to this place; but as I felt my hour was coming, I longed to look upon you again. You are and have been happy — your looks bespeak it: but Margaret, what do mine tell of? — Of weary days and sleepless nights — of sickness of heart, and agony of soul — of crime — of pain — of sorrow, and deep destroying love!" His strength was exhausted with the feeling with which he uttered this, and he sank back on the bed.

Margaret was exceedingly agitated, and was rising to call for assistance, but he caught her hand in his cold grasp. "Do not go yet," he said, in a low voice — "I came far to see you!" His grasp relaxed, and Margaret, drawing away her hand, poured some wine in a cup, and held it to his lips:

he swallowed a little, and, looking up in her face, she saw that his eyes were filled with tears. "You are going to leave me, Margaret?"

"Yes," she replied, "I must go now, but I will see you again."

"Never! — you will never see me again!" he said, with fresh energy: "but, before you go, tell me that you forgive me all that is past."

"I do forgive you, indeed, as truly as I hope to be forgiven!" said Margaret, affected — and turning away, she left the cottage.

On the third day from this, Calverley, bearing the felon's brand, unwept and unknown, was laid in the stranger's grave.

THE END OF THE BONDMAN.

SELECT POEMS.

ADDRESS TO LORD BYRON, ON THE PUBLICATION OF CHILDE HAROLD.

BY GRANVILLE PENN.

COLD is the breast, extinct the vital spark,
That kindles not to flame at Harold's muse;
The mental vision, too, how surely dark,
Which, as the anxious wanderer it pursues,
Sees not a noble heart, that fain would choose
The course to heaven, could that course be found;
And, since on earth it nothing fears to lose,
Would joy to press that bless'd ethereal ground,
Where peace, and truth, and life, and friends, and love abound.

I "deem not Harold's breast a breast of steel,"
Steel'd is the heart that could the thought receive,
But warm, affectionate, and quick to feel,
Eager in joy, yet not unwont to grieve;
And sorely do I view his vessel leave —
Like erring bark, of card and chart bereft —
The shore to which his soul would love to cleave;
Would, Harold, I could make thee know full oft,
That, bearing thus the helm, the land thou seek'st is left.

Is Harold "satiated with worldly joy?"
"Leaves he his home, his land, without a sigh?"
'T is half the way to heaven! — oh! then employ
That blessed freedom of thy soul, to fly
To him, who, ever gracious, ever nigh,
Demands the heart that breaks the world's hard chain;
If early freed, though by satiety,
Vast is the privilege that man may gain; —
Who early foils the foe, may well the prize obtain.

Thou lovest Nature with a filial zeal,
Canst thy mankind to brood with her apart;
Unutterable sure, that inward feel,
When swells the soul, and heaves the labouring heart
With yearning throes, which nothing can impart
But Nature's majesty, remote from man!
In kindred raptures, I have borne my part;
The Pyrenean mountains loved to scan,
And from the crest of Alps peruse the mighty plan.

"'Tis ecstasy to brood o'er flood and fell,"
 "To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,"
 Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
 And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been ;
 To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
 With the wild flocks that never need a fold ;
 Alone o'er steep and foaming falls to lean ; —
 This is not solitude ! — 't is but to hold
 converse with Nature's God, and see *His* stores unroll'd."

Forget we not the Artist in the art,
 Nor overlook the Giver in the grace ;
 Say, what is Nature, but that little part
 Which man's imperfect vision can embrace
 Of the stupendous whole, which fills all space ;
 The work of Him by whom all space is bound !
 Shall Raphael's pencil Raphael's self efface ?
 Shall Handel's self be lost in Handel's sound ?
 Or, shall not Nature's God in Nature's works be found ?

But Harold "through sin's labyrinth has run,"
 Nor "made atonement when he did amiss ;"
 And does the memory of that evil done
 Disturb his spirit, or obscure his bliss !
 'T is just ; 't is Harold's due — yet let not this
 Press heavier on his heart than heaven ordains ;
 What mortal lives, not guilty nor remiss ?
 What breast that has not felt remorse's pains ?
 What human soul so pure, but mark'd by sin's dark stains ?

And can this helpless thing, pollute, debased,
 Its own disfigured nature e'er reform ?
 Say, can the sculptured marble, once defaced,
 Restore its lineament, renew its form ?
 That can the sculptor's hand alone perform,
 Else must the marr'd and mutilated stone
 For ever lie imperfect and deform ; —
 So man may sin and wail, but not *alone* ;
 That restorative power belongs to God alone.

Yet is atonement made : — Creation's Lord
 Deserts not thus the work his skill devised ;
 Man, not his creature only, but his ward,
 Too dearly in his Maker's eye is prized,
 Than thus to be abandon'd and despised.
Atonement is the Almighty's richest dole,
 And ever in the mystic plan comprised,
 To mend the foul defacements of the soul,
 Restore God's likeness lost, and make the image whole.

Oh ! "if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be,
 A land of souls beyond death's sable shore,"
 How would quick-hearted Harold burn to see
 The much-lov'd objects of his life once more,
 And Nature's new sublimities explore
 In better worlds ! — Ah ! Harold, I conjure,

Speak not in *ifs* ; — to him whom God hath taught,
 If aught on earth, *that* blessed truth is sure ;
 All gracious God, to quiet human thought,
 Has pledged his sacred word, and demonstration wrought.

Did Babylon, in truth, by Cyrus fall
 Is't true that Persia stain'd the Grecian land ?
 Did Philip's son the Persian host enthrall ?
 Or Cæsar's legions press the British strand ?
 Fell Palestine by Titus' sword and brand ? —
 Can Harold to such facts *his faith* intrust !
 Then let him humbly learn, and understand : —
 " Then Christ is risen from the dead ! " — the first
 Dear pledge of mortal frames yet mouldering in the dust.

But Harold " will not look beyond the tomb,"
 And thinks " he may not hope for rest before : "
 Fie ! Harold, fie ! unconscious of thy doom,
 The nature of thy soul thou know'st not more ;
 Nor know'st thy lofty mind, which loves to soar ;
 Thy glowing spirit, and thy thoughts sublime,
 Are foreign to this flat and naked shore,
 And languish for their own celestial clime,
 Far in the bounds of space, — beyond the bounds of time.

There must thou surely live — and of that life
 Ages on ages shall no part exhaust :
 But with renew'd existence ever rife,
 No more in dark uncertainty be toss'd,
 When once the teeming barrier is cross'd ;
 (The birth of mortals to immortal day) —
 O let not then this precious hour be lost,
 But humbly turn to Him who points the way
 To ever-during youth, from infinite decay !

Such, such the prospect, — such the glorious boon,
 The last great end in Heaven's supreme design ;
 Deem not thy cloud continuous, for soon
 Must truth break in upon a soul like thine,
 Yearning, unconscious, for the light divine ;
 Oh ! hear the gracious word to thee address'd
 By Him, thy Lord, almighty and benign —
 " Come unto me, all ye by care oppress'd !
 Come to my open arms, and I will give you rest ! "

Would thou hadst loved through Judah's courts to stray ;
 Would Sion Hill Parnassus' love might share ;
 What joy to hear thy muse's potent lay
 The sacred honours of that land declare,
 And all that holy scene engage her care ;
 Where poets harp'd ere Homer's shell was strung,
 Where heavenly wisdom pour'd her treasures rare,
 Long, long ere Athens woke to Solon's song,
 And truth-inspired seers of after ages sung.

But, thanks for what we have ; and for the more
 Thy muse doth bid the listening ear attend,

Nor vainly bids those whom she charm'd before;
 Oh! let not then this humble verse offend,
 Her skill can judge the speaking of a friend;
 Not zeal presumptuous prompts the cautious strain,
 But Christian zeal, that would to all extend
 The cloudless ray and steady calm that reign,
 Where evangelic truths their empire due maintain.

HERE'S TO THEE, MY SCOTTISH LASSIE.

BY THE REV. JOHN MOULTRIE.

HERE'S to thee, my Scottish lassie! here's a hearty health to thee,
 For thine eye so bright, thy form so light, and thy step so firm and free;
 For all thine artless elegance, and all thy native grace,
 For the music of thy mirthful voice, and the sunshine of thy face;
 For thy guileless look and speech sincere, yet sweet as speech can be,
 Here's a health my Scottish lassie! here's a hearty health to thee!

Here's to thee, my Scottish lassie! — though my glow of youth is o'er;
 And I, as once I felt and dream'd, must feel and dream no more;
 Though the world, with all its frosts and storms, has chill'd my soul at last,
 And genius, with the foodful looks of youthful friendship past;
 Though my path is dark and lonely now, o'er this world's dreary sea, —
 Here's a health, my Scottish lassie! here's a hearty health to thee!

Here's to thee, my Scottish lassie! — though I know that not for me
 Is thine eye so bright, thy form so light, and thy step so firm and free
 Though thou, with cold and careless looks, wilt often pass me by,
 Unconscious of my swelling heart, and of my wistful eye;
 Though thou wilt wed some Highland love, nor waste one thought on me, —
 Here's a health, my Scottish lassie! here's a hearty health to thee!

Here's to thee, my Scottish lassie! when I meet thee in the throng
 Of merry youths and maidens, dancing lightsomely along,
 I'll dream away an hour or twain, still gazing on thy form,
 As it flashes through the baser crowd, like lightning through a storm;
 And I, perhaps, shall touch thy hand, and share thy looks of glee,
 And for once, my Scottish lassie! dance a giddy dance with thee.

Here's to thee, my Scottish lassie! — I shall think of thee at even,
 When I see its first and fairest star come smiling up through heaven;
 I shall hear thy sweet and touching voice, in every wind that grieves,
 As it whirls from the abandon'd oak its wither'd autumn leaves;
 In the gloom of the wild forest, in the stillness of the sea,
 I shall think, my Scottish lassie! I shall often think of thee.

Here's to thee, my Scottish lassie! — in my sad and lonely hours,
 The thought of thee comes o'er me, like the breath of distant flowers; —
 Like the music that enchants mine ear, the sights that bless mine eye,
 Like the verdure of the meadow, like the azure of the sky;
 Like the rainbow in the evening, like the blossoms on the tree,
 Is the thought, my Scottish lassie! is the lonely thought of thee.

Here's to thee, my Scottish lassie! — though my muse must soon be dumb,
 (For graver thoughts and duties, with my graver years, are come,

Though my soul must burst the bonds of earth, and learn to soar on high,
And to look on this world's follies with a calm and sober eye;
Though the merry wine must seldom flow, the revel cease for me, —
Still to thee, my Scottish lassie! still I'll drink a health to thee.

Here's a health, my Scottish lassie! here's a parting health to thee;
May thine be still a cloudless lot, though it be far from me!
May still thy laughing eye be bright, and open still thy brow,
Thy thoughts as pure, thy speech as free, thy heart as light as now!
And, whate'er my after fate, my dearest toast shall be, —
Still a health, my Scottish lassie! still a hearty health to thee!

A STRAIN OF MUSIC.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

I am never merry when I hear sweet music
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Oh! joyously, triumphantly, sweet sounds! ye swell and float,
A breath of hope, of youth, of spring, is pour'd on every note;
And yet my full o'erburthen'd heart grows troubled by your power,
And ye seem to press the long past years into one little hour.

If I have look'd on lovely scenes, that now I view no more —
A summer sea, with glittering ships, along the mountain shore,
A ruin, girt with solemn woods, and a crimson evening sky, —
Ye bring me back those images fast as ye wander by.

If in the happy walks and days of childhood I have heard,
And into childhood's memory link'd the music of a bird;
A bird that with the primrose came, and in the violet's train, —
Ye give me that wild melody of early life again.

Or if a dear and gentle voice, that now is changed, or gone,
Hath left within my bosom deep the thrilling of its tone,
I find that murmur in your notes — they touch the chords of thought,
And a sudden flow of tenderness across my soul is brought.

If I have bid a spot farewell, on whose familiar ground
To every path, and leaf, and flower, my soul in love was bound:
If I have watch'd the parting step of one who came not back,
The feeling of that moment wakes in your exulting track.

Yet on ye float! — the very air seems kindling with your glee!
Oh! do ye fling this mournful spell, sweet sounds! alone on me?
Or, have a thousand hearts replied, as mine doth now, in sighs,
To the glad music breathing thus of blue Italian skies?

I know not! — only this I know, that not by me on earth,
May the deep joy of song be found, untroubled in its birth;
It must be for a brighter life, for some immortal sphere,
Wherein its flow shall have no taste of the bitter fountains here.

THE WAR OF THE LEAGUE.

BY THOMAS MACAULEY.

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!
 And glory to our Sovereign Liege, King Henry of Navarre!
 Now let there be the merry sound of music and of dance,
 Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny vines, O pleasant land of France:
 And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters,
 Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters.
 As thou wert constant in our illa, be joyous in our joy,
 For cold, and stiff, and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy.
 Hurrah! hurrah! a single field hath turned the chance of war,
 Hurrah! hurrah! for Ivry, and King Henry of Navarre.

Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, at the dawn of day,
 We saw the army of the League drawn out in long array;
 With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel peers,
 And Appenzel's stout infantry, and Egmont's Flemish spears.
 There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land!
 And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon in his hand;
 And, as we look'd on them, we thought of Seine's empurpled flood,
 And good Coligni's hoary hair all dabbled with his blood;
 And we cried unto the living God, who rules the fate of war,
 To fight for his own holy name, and Henry of Navarre.

The King is come to marshal us, in all his armour drest,
 And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.
 He look'd upon his people, and a tear was in his eye;
 He look'd upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high.
 Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,
 Down all our line, a deafening shout, "God save our Lord the King."
 "And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,—
 For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,—
 Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,
 And be your oriflamme, to-day, the helmet of Navarre."

Hurrah! the foes are moving! Hark to the mingled din,
 Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin!
 The fiery Duke is pricking fast across Saint André's plain,
 And all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and Almayne.
 Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
 Charge for the golden lilies now,—upon them with the lance!
 A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,
 A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest;
 And in they burst, and on they rush'd, while, like a guiding star,
 Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre.

Now, God be praised, the day is ours! Mayenne hath turn'd his rein.
 D'Aumale hath cried for quarter. The Flemish Count is slain.
 Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;
 The field is heap'd with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven mail;
 And then we thought on vengeance, and, all along our van,
 "Remember St. Bartholomew," was pass'd from man to man;

But out spake gentle Henry, "No Frenchman is my foe:
Down, down, with every foreigner, but let your brethren go."
Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
As our Sovereign Lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre!

Ho! maidens of Vienna! Ho! matrons of Lucerne!
Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who never shall return.
Ho! Philip, send, for charity, thy Mexican pistoles,
That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy poor spearmen's souls!
Ho! gallant nobles of the League, look that your arms be bright!
Ho! burghers of Saint Genevieve, keep watch and ward to-night!
For our God hath crush'd the tyrant, our God hath rais'd the slave,
And mock'd the counsel of the wise, and the valour of the brave.
Then glory to his holy name, from whom all glories are;
And glory to our Sovereign Lord, King Henry of Navarre.

THE AMERICAN EAGLE.

BY CHARLES WEST THOMPSON.

BIRD of the heavens! whose matchless eye
Alone can front the blaze of day,
And, wand'ring through the radiant sky,
Ne'er from the sunlight turns away;
Whose ample wing was made to rise
Majestic o'er the loftiest peak,
On whose chill tops the winter skies,
Around thy nest, in tempests speak.
What ranger of the winds can dare,
Proud mountain king! with thee compare;
Or lift his gaudier plumes on high
Before thy native majesty,
When thou hast ta'en thy seat alone,
Upon thy cloud-encircled throne?

Bird of the cliffs! thy noble form
Might well be thought almost divine;
Born for the thunder and the storm,
The mountain and the rock are thine;
And there, where never foot has been.
Thy eyry is sublimely hung,
Where louing skies their wrath begin,
And loudest lullabies are sung
By the fierce spirit of the blast,
When, his snow mantle o'er him cast,
He sweeps across the mountain top,
With a dark fury naught can stop,
And wings his wild unearthly way
Far through the clouded realms of day.

Bird of the sun! to thee — to thee
The earliest tints of dawn are known,
And 'tis thy proud delight to see
The monarch mount his gorgeous throne;

Throwing the crimson drapery by,
 That half impedes his glorious way;
 And mounting up the radiant sky,
 E'en what he is, — the king of day!
 Before the regent of the skies
 Men shrink, and veil their dazzled eyes!
 But thou, in regal majesty,
 Hast kingly rank as well as he;
 And with a steady, dauntless gaze,
 Thou meet'st the splendour of his blaze.

Bird of Columbia! well art thou
 An emblem of our native land;
 With unblench'd front and noble brow,
 Among the nations doom'd to stand;
 Proud, like her mighty mountain woods;
 Like her own rivers, wandering free;
 And sending forth, from hills and floods,
 The joyous shout of liberty!
 Like thee, majestic bird! like thee,
 She stands in unbought majesty,
 With spreading wing, untired and strong,
 That dares a soaring far and long,
 That mounts aloft, nor looks below,
 And will not quail though tempests blow.

The admiration of the earth,
 In grand simplicity she stands;
 Like thee, the storms beheld her birth,
 And she was nursed by rugged hands;
 But, past the fierce and furious war,
 Her rising fame new glory brings,
 For kings and nobles come from far
 To seek the shelter of her wings.
 And like thee, rider of the cloud,
 She mounts the heavens, serene and proud,
 Great in a pure and noble fame,
 Great in her spotless champion's name,
 And destined in her day to be
 Mighty as Rome — more nobly free.

My native land! my native land!
 To whom my thoughts will fondly turn:
 For her the warmest hopes expand,
 For her the heart with fears will yearn.
 Oh! may she keep her eye, like thee,
 Proud eagle of the rocky wild,
 Fix'd on the sun of liberty,
 By rank, by faction unbeguiled;
 Remembering still the rugged road
 Our venerable fathers trod,
 When they through toil and danger press'd,
 To gain their glorious bequest,
 And from each lip the caution fell
 To those who follow'd, "Guard it well."

THE ÆOLIAN HARP.

BY ALARIC A. WATTS.

*Metinks it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world like this,
Where even the breezes and the common air
Contain the power and spirit of harmony.*—COLERIDGE.

HARP of the winds ! What music may compare
With thy wild gush of melody ; — Or where,
'Mid this world's discords, may we hope to meet
Tones like to thine — so soothing and so sweet !

Harp of the winds ! When Summer's Zephyr wings
His airy flight across thy tremulous strings,
As if enamour'd of his breath, they move
With soft low murmurs, — like the voice of Love,
Ere passion deepens it, or sorrow mars
Its harmony with sighs ! — All earth-born jars
Confess thy soothing power, when strains like these
From thy bliss-breathing chords are borne upon the breeze !

But when a more pervading force compels
Their sweetness into strength, — and swiftly swells
Each tenderer tone to fulness, — what a strange
And spirit-stirring sense that fitful change
Wakes in my heart ! — Visions of days long past, —
Hope — joy — pride — pain — and passion — with the blast
Come rushing on my soul, — till I believe
Some strong enchantment, purposed to deceive,
Hath fix'd its spell upon me, and I grieve
I may not burst its bonds ! — Anon the gale
Softly subsides, — and whisperings wild prevail
Of inarticulate melody, which seem
Not music, but its shadow ; — what a dream
Is to reality ; — or as the swell
(Those who have felt alone have power to tell)
Of the full heart where love was late a guest
Ere it recovers from its sweet unrest !
The charm is o'er ! Each warring thought flits by
Quell'd by that more than mortal minstrelsy !
Each turbulent feeling owns its sweet control,
And peace once more returns, and settles on my soul !

Harp of the winds ! thy ever tuneful chords,
In language far more eloquent than words
Of earth's best skill'd philosophers, do teach
A deep and heavenly lesson ! Could it reach,
With its impressive truths, the heart of man,
Then were he bless'd indeed ; and he might scan
His coming miseries with delight ! The storm
Of keen adversity would then deform

No more the calm stream of his thoughts, nor bring
 Its wonted "grisly train;" but rather wring
 Sweetness from out his grief, — till even the string
 On which his sorrows hung, should make reply,
 However rudely swept, in tones of melody!

THE NEGLECTED CHILD.

BY THOMAS H. BAYLY.

I NEVER was a favourite —
 My mother never smiled
 On me, with half the tenderness
 That bless'd her fairer child;
 I've seen her kiss my sister's cheek,
 While fondled on her knee;
 I've turn'd away to hide my tears, —
 There was no kiss for me!

And yet I strove to please, with all
 My little store of sense;
 I *strove* to please, and infancy
 Can rarely give offence;
 But when my artless efforts met
 A cold, ungentle check,
 I did not dare to throw myself
 In tears upon her neck.

How blessed are the beautiful!
 Love watches o'er their birth;
 O beauty! in my nursery
 I learn'd to know thy worth; —
 For even *there*, I often felt
 Forsaken and forlorn;
 And wish'd — for others wish'd it too —
 I never had been born!

I'm sure I was affectionate, —
 But in my sister's face,
 There was a look of love, that claim'd
 A smile or an embrace.
 But when I raised my lip, to meet
 The pressure children prize,
 None knew the feelings of my heart, —
 They spoke not in my eyes.

But oh! that heart too keenly felt
 The anguish of neglect;
 I saw my sister's lovely form
 With gems and roses deck'd;
 I did not covet *them*: but oft,
 When wantonly reproved,
 I envied her the privilege
 Of being so beloved.

But soon a time of triumph came —
 A time of sorrow too, —
 For sickness o'er my sister's form
 Her venom'd mantle threw : —
 The features, once so beautiful,
 Now wore the hue of death ;
 And former friends shrank fearfully
 From her infectious breath.

'T was then, unwearied, day and night,
 I watch'd beside her bed,
 And fearlessly upon my breast
 I pillow'd her poor head.
 She lived ! — and loved me for my care ! —
 My grief was at an end ;
 I was a lonely being once,
 But now I *have* a friend !

THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

THEY grow in beauty, side by side,
 They fill'd one house with glee —
 Their graves are sever'd far and wide,
 By mount, and stream, and sea !

The same fond mother bent at night
 O'er each fair sleeping brow,
 She had each folded flower in sight —
 Where are those dreamers now ?

One 'midst the forests of the west
 By a dark stream is laid ;
 The Indian knows his place of rest,
 Far in the cedar shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one ;
 He lies where pearls lie deep ;
 He was the loved of all, yet none
 O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where southern vines are dress'd,
 Above the noble slain,
 He wrapp'd his colours round his breast,
 On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one — o'er her the myrtle showers
 Its leaves by soft winds fann'd,
 She faded, 'midst Italian flowers,
 The last of that bright band.

And parted thus, *they* rest who play'd
 Beneath the same green tree,
 Whose voices mingled as they pray'd
 Around one parent knee !

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
 And cheer'd with songs the hearth —
 Alas for love, if *thou* wert all,
 And naught beyond on earth !

SAPPHO.

BY MISS LONDON.

She was one
 Whose Lyre the spirit of sweet song had hung
 With myrtle and with laurel ; — on whose head
 Genius had shed his starry glories, — transcripts
 Of woman's loving heart and woman's disappointment.

SHE lean'd upon her harp, and thousands look'd
 On her in love and wonder ; — thousands knelt
 And worship'd in her presence ; — burning tears,
 And words that died in utterance, and a pause
 Of breathless agitated eagerness,
 First gave the full heart's homage, then came forth
 A shout that rose to heaven ; and the hills,
 The distant valleys, all rang with the name
 Of the *Æolian Sappho* ! — Every heart
 Found in itself some echo to her song.
 Low notes of love, hopes beautiful and fresh, —
 And some gone by for ever — glorious dreams,
 High aspirations, those thrice gentle thoughts
 That dwell upon the absent and the dead,
 Were breathing in her music — and these are
 Chords every bosom vibrates to. But she,
 Upon whose brow the laurel crown is placed,
 Her colour's varying with deep emotion —
 There is a softer blush than conscious pride,
 Upon her cheek, and in that tremulous smile
 Is all a woman's timid tenderness.
 Her eye is on a Youth, and other days
 And feelings warm have rushed on her soul
 With all their former influence ; — thoughts that slept
 Cold, calm as death, have waken'd to new life ; —
 Whole years' existence have pass'd in that glance. —
 She had once loved in very early days ;
 That was a thing gone by. One had call'd forth
 The music of her soul. — He loved her too,
 But not as she did : — she was unto him
 As a young bird, whose early flight he train'd,
 Whose first wild songs were sweet, for he had taught
 Those songs : — but she look'd up to him with all
 Youth's deep and passionate idolatry ; —
 Love was her heart's sole universe — he was
 To her, Hope, Genius, Energy, — the God
 Her inmost spirit worship'd, — in whose smile
 Was all e'en minstrel pride held precious ; praise
 Was prized but as the echo of his own.
 But other times and other feelings came : —
 Hope is love's element, and love with her
 Sicken'd of its own vanity. — She lived

Mid bright realities and brighter dreams,
 Those strange but exquisite imaginings
 That tinge with such sweet colours minstrel thoughts :
 And Fame, like sunlight, was upon her path ;
 And strangers heard her name, and eyes that never
 Had look'd on Sappho, yet had wept with her.
 Her first love never wholly lost its power,
 But, like rich incense shed, although no trace
 Was of its visible presence, yet its sweetness
 Mingled with every feeling, and it gave
 That soft and melancholy tenderness
 Which was the magic of her song. — That Youth
 Who knelt before her was so like the shape
 That haunted her spring dreams — the same dark eyes,
 Whose light had once been as the light of heaven ! —
 Others breathed winning flatteries, — she turn'd
 A careless hearing ; but when Phaon spoke,
 Her heart beat quicker, and the crimson light
 Upon her cheek gave a most tender answer. —
 She loved with all the ardour of a heart
 Which lives but in itself ; her life had pass'd
 Amid the grand creations of the thought.
 Love was to her a vision ; — it was now
 Heighten'd into devotion. — but a soul
 So gifted and so passionate as hers
 Will seek companionship in vain, and find
 Its feelings solitary. — Phaon soon
 Forgot the fondness of his Lesbian maid ;
 And Sappho knew that talents, riches, fame,
 May not sooth slighted love.

There is a dark rock looks on the blue sea ;
 'T was there love's last song echo'd : — there she sleeps,
 Whose lyre was crown'd with laurel, and whose name
 Will be remember'd long as Love or Song
 Are sacred — the devoted Sappho !

THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

WHAT hid'st thou in thy treasure-caves and cells ?
 Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious Main !
 Pale glist'ning pearls, and rainbow-colour'd shells,
 Bright things which gleam unreck'd of and in vain.
 Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea !
 We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the Depths have more ! What wealth untold,
 Far down, and shining through their stillness, lies !
 Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
 Won from ten thousand royal Argosies.
 Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful Main !
 Earth claims not these again !

Yet more, the Depths have more ! — Thy waves have roll'd
 Above the cities of a world gone by !
 Sand hath fill'd up the palaces of old,
 Sea-weed o'ergrown the halls of revelry !
 Dash o'er them, Ocean ! in thy scornful play,
 Man yields them to decay !

Yet more ! the Billows and the Depths have more !
 High hearts and brave are gather'd to thy breast !
 They hear not now the booming waters roar, —
 The battle-thunders will not break their rest.
 Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave ! —
 Give back the true and brave !

Give back the lost and lovely ! — Those for whom
 The place was kept at board and hearth so long ;
 The prayer went up through midnight's breathless gloom,
 And the vain yearning woke 'midst festal song !
 Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown,
 — But all is not thine own !

FIELD FLOWERS.

BY THOMAS CAMPBELL.

Ye field flowers ! the gardens eclipse you 't is true,
 Yet, wildings of nature, I dote upon you,
 For ye waft me to summers of old,
 When the earth teem'd around me with fairy delight,
 And when daisies and buttercups gladden'd my sight,
 Like treasures of silver and gold.

I love you for lulling me back into dreams
 Of the blue Highland mountains and echoing streams,
 And of broken blades breathing their balm ;
 While the deer was seen glancing in sunshine remote,
 And the deep mellow crush of the wood-pigeon's note,
 Made music that sweeten'd the calm.

Not a pastoral song has a pleasanter tune
 Than ye speak to my heart, little wildings of June ;
 Of old ruinous castles ye tell :
 I thought it delightful your beauties to find,
 When the magic of nature first breathed on my mind,
 And your blossoms were part of her spell.

Even now what affections the violet awakes ;
 What loved little islands, twice seen in the lakes,
 Can the wild water-lily restore.
 What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks ;
 What pictures of pebbles and minnowy brooks,
 In the vetches that tangle the shore.

Earth's cultureless buds ! to my heart ye were dear
 Ere the fever of passion, or ague of fear,
 Had scath'd my existence's bloom ;
 Once I welcome you more, in life's passionless stage
 With the visions of youth to revisit my age,
 And I wish you to grow on my tomb.

LINES TO A YOUNG LADY,

ON HER MARRIAGE.

BY G. M. FITZGERALD.

THEY tell me, gentle lady, that they deck thee for a bride,
 That the wreath is woven for thy hair, the bridegroom by thy side ;
 And I think I hear thy father's sigh, thy mother's calmer tone,
 As they give thee to another's arms — their beautiful — their own.

I never saw a bridal, but my eyelid hath been wet,
 And it always seem'd to me as though a joyous crowd were met
 To see the saddest sight of all, a gay and girlish thing
 Lay aside her maiden gladness — for a name — and for a ring.

And other cares will claim thy thoughts, and other hearts thy love,
 And gayer friends may be around, and bluer skies above ;
 Yet thou, when I behold thee next, may'st wear upon thy brow,
 Perchance, a mother's look of care, for that which decks it now.

And when I think how often I have seen thee, with thy mild
 And lovely look, and step of air, and bearing like a child,
 Oh ! how mournfully, how mournfully the thought comes o'er my brain,
 When I think thou ne'er may'st be that free and girlish thing again.

I would that, as my heart dictates, just such might be my lay,
 And my voice should be a voice of mirth, a music like the May ;
 But it may not be ! — within my breast all frozen are the springs,
 The murmur dies upon the lip — the music on the strings.

But a voice is floating round me, and it tells me in my rest,
 That sunshine shall illumine thy path, that joy shall be thy guest,
 That thy life shall be a summer's day, whose evening shall go down,
 Like the evening in the eastern clime, that never knows a frown.

When thy foot is at the altar, when the ring hath press'd thy hand,
 When those thou lov'st, and those that love thee, weeping round thee stand,
 Oh ! may the verse that friendship weaves, like a spirit of the air,
 Be o'er thee at that moment — for a blessing and a prayer !

THE EAST INDIAMAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ROUGE ET NOIR.

How like a younker, or a prodigal,
 The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
 Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind !
 How like the prodigal doth she return ;
 With over-weather'd ribs, and ragged sails,
 Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind !

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

AN anxious, lingering, perilous voyage past,
 An India ship hail'd Albion's land at last !
 Moor'd in the Downs, her mighty pinions close
 Like some far flying bird that seeks repose
 While, crowding on the deck, a hundred eyes
 Turn'd shoreward — flash'd with pleasure and surprise.
 That eve they anchor'd, from the horizon's hem
 The virgin Moon, as if to welcome them,
 Rose from her rest — but would no more reveal
 Than the faint outline of her pale profile :
 Though soon (as maids forego their fears) she gave
 Her orb'd brow to kiss the wanton wave :
 Till — like a scornful lover, swoll'n with pride,
 Because too fondly loved to be denied,
 The rude wave spurn'd her off, and raised that loud
 And angry blast that scream'd through sail and shroud,
 The livelong night on which my harp is dwelling.
 Meanwhile, the swarthy crew, each care dispelling,
 Had sported thrice three summer suns away
 Since they had cast their anchor in that bay.
 Oh, none save Fortune's step-sons, doom'd to roam
 The deep, can prize a harbour and a home !
 The temperate breeze their sun-bronzed temples blessing —
 A native shore the gladden'd eye refreshing —
 The painted pinnace dancing from the land
 Freight'd with friends — the pressure of the hand,
 Whose pulse throbs happy seconds — the warm gush
 Of blood into the cheek, as it would rush
 With the heart's welcome ere the tongue could half
 Perform its office — feeling's telegraph !
 Impassion'd smiles, and tears of rapture starting —
 Oh, how unlike the tears which fell at parting !
 And all were theirs — that good ship's gallant crew —
 As though each joy which absence render'd due
 Were paid in one bright moment : such are known
 To those long sever'd, loving, loved, alone !

A gorgeous freight that broad-sail'd vessel bore —
 The blazing diamonds and the blushing ore ;
 Spices that sigh'd their incense, till the sails
 Were fann'd along on aromatic gales

From Orient lands. Then marvel not if he
 Who there is Chief should look exultingly
 Back on the storms he baffled, and should know
 The bosom's warmest wildest overflow
 While gazing on the land which laugh'd before him —
 The smooth sea round — the blue pavilion o'er him!
 Yet felt he more than ever sprang from these,
 For love demanded deeper sympathies;
 And long in lonely bower had sigh'd for him
 A fond fair Bride, whose infant Cherubim
 Oft spirit-clouded from its playthings crept,
 To weep beside its mother while she wept.
 But oh, they met at length! And such sweet days
 Already proved, as leave a light that plays
 Upon the memory when the warmth is gone.
 The fount thus treasures sunbeams, and shines on
 Through dusk and darkness. Like some happy mother,
 Joy mark'd the hours pursuing one another —
 A wreath of buoyant angels! Yet as they
 Wheel'd laughing round, oft sigh'd, to make them stay!

This was a day of banqueting on board;
 And swan-wing'd barks, and barges many oar'd
 Came crowded to the feast. The young — the gay —
 The beautiful — were there. Right merrily
 The pleasure boats glide onward; — with swift prow
 The clear wave curling, till around each bow,
 With frequent flash, the bright and feathery spray
 Threw mimic rainbows at the sun in play.
 The ship is won, the silken chair is lower'd —
 Exulting Youth and Beauty bound on board:
 And, while they wondering gaze on sail and shroud,
 The flag flaps o'er them like a crimson cloud.

Young Pleasure kiss'd each heart! From Persia's loom
 An ample awning spread its purple bloom
 To canopy the guests; and vases, wreath'd
 With deep-hued flowers and foliage, sweetly breathed
 Their incense, fresh as zephyrs when they rove
 Among the blossoms of a citron grove;
 Soft sounds — (invisible spirits on the wing) —
 Were heard and felt around them hovering; —
 In short, some magic seem'd to sway the hour,
 The wand-struck deck becomes an orient bower!
 A very wilderness of blushing roses,
 Just such as Love would choose when he reposes.
 The pendent orange, from a lush of leaves,
 Hangs like Hesperian gold; and, tied in sheaves,
 Carnations prop their triple coronals;
 The grape, out-peeping from thick foliage, falls
 Like cluster'd amethysts in deep festoons;
 And shells are scatter'd round, which Indian moons
 Had sheeted with the silver of their beams;
 But oh, what, more than all, the scene beseeems,
 Fair, faultless forms, glide there with wing-like motion! —
 Bright as young Peris rising from the ocean!

Eve darken'd down — and yet they were not gone;
 The sky had changed, — the sudden storm came on!

ONE waved on high a ruby sparkling bowl —
 (Youth, passion, wine, ran riot in his soul) —
 "Fill to the brim," he cried; "let others peer
 Their doubtful path to heaven; — my heaven is here!
 This hour is mine, and who can dash its bliss?
 Fate dare not darken such an hour as this!"
 Then stoop'd to quaff; — but (as a charm were thrown)
 His hand, his lips, grew motionless as stone;
 His drunkenness of heart no more deceives —
 The thunder growls, the surge-smote vessel heaves;
 And while aghast he stared, a hurrying squall
 Rent the wide awning, and discover'd all!
 Across their eyes the hissing lightning blazed —
 The black wave burst beside them as they gazed;
 And dizzily the thick surf scatter'd o'er them;
 And dim and distant loom'd the land before them;
 No longer firm — th' eternal hills did leave
 Their solid rest, and heaved, or seem'd to heave,
 O, 't was an awful moment! — for the crew
 Had rashly, deeply drank, while yet they knew
 No ruling eye was on them — and became
 Wild as the tempest! Peril could not tame —
 Nay, stirr'd their brutal hearts to more excess;
 Round the deserted banquet-board they press,
 Like men transform'd to fiends, with oath and yell!
 And many deem'd the sea less terrible
 Than maniacs fiercely ripe for all, or aught,
 That ever flash'd upon a desperate thought!
 Strange laughter mingled with the shriek and groan —
 Nor woman shrank, nor woman wept, alone.
 Some, as a bolt had smote them, fell; — and some
 Stared haggard wild: — dismay had struck them dumb.
 There were of firmer nerve, or fiercer cast,
 Who scowl'd defiance back upon the blast —
 Half scorning in their haughty souls to be
 Thus pent and buffeted. And tenderly,
 Even then, to manly hearts fair forms were drawn,
 Whose virgin eyes had never shed their dawn
 Before — soft, beautifully shy — to flush
 A lover's hope; but as the dove will rush
 Into the school-boy's bosom to elude
 The swooping goshawk — woman, thus subdued,
 Will cling to those she shunn'd in lighter mood —
 The soul confess emotions but conceal'd —
 Pure, glowing, deep, though lingeringly reveal'd;
 That true chameleon which imbibes the tone
 Of every passing hue she pauses on!
 O, 't is the cheek that's false — so subtly taught,
 It takes not of its colour from the thought;
 But like volcanic mountains veil'd in snow,
 Hides the heart's lava, while it works below!

And there were two who loved, but never told
 Their love to one another: years had roll'd
 Since Passion touch'd them with his purple wing,
 Though still their youth was in its blossoming.

Lofty of soul, as riches were denied,
 He deem'd it mean to woo a wealthy bride ;
 And (for her tears were secret) coldly she
 Wreath'd her pale brow in maiden dignity ;
 Yet each had caught the other's eye reposing,
 And, far as looks disclose, the truth disclosing ;
 But when they met, pride check'd the soul's warm sigh,
 And froze the melting spirit of the eye —
 A pride in vulgar hearts that never shone.
 And thus they loved, and silently loved on ;
 But *this* was not a moment when the head
 Could trifle with the heart ! The cloud that spread
 Its chilling veil between them, now had past —
 Too long awaking — but they woke at last !
 He rush'd where clung the fainting fair one — sought
 To sooth with hopes he felt not, cherish'd not ;
 And while in passionate support he press'd,
 She raised her eyes — then swiftly on his breast
 Hid her blanch'd cheek — as if resign'd to share
 The worst with him ; — nay, die contented there !
 That silent act was fondly eloquent ;
 And to the youth's deep soul, like lightning, sent
 A gleam of rapture — exquisite yet brief,
 As his (poor wretch) that in the grave of grief
 Feels Fortune's sun burst on him, and looks up
 With hope to heaven — forgetful of the cup,
 The deadly cup, his shivering hand yet strain'd —
 A hot heart-pang reminds him — it is drain'd !
 Away with words ! for when had true love ever
 A happy star to bless it ? — Never, never !
 And oh, the brightest after-smile of Fate
 Is but a sad reprieve, which comes — too late !

The riot shout peal'd on ; — but deep distress
 Had sunk all else in utter hopelessness !
 One mark'd the strife of frenzy and despair —
 The most concern'd, and yet the calmest there ;
 In bitterness of soul beheld his crew —
 He should have known them, and he thought he knew :
 The blood-hound on the leash may fawn, obey —
 He'll tear thee, shouldst thou cross him at his prey !
 One only trust survives, a doubtful one —
 But oh, how cherish'd, every other gone !
 " While hold our cables, fear not " — As he spoke
 A sea burst o'er them, and their cables broke !
 Then, like a lion bounding from the toil,
 The ship shot through the billow's black recoil ;
 Urged by the howling blast — all guidance gone —
 They shuddering felt her reeling, rushing on —
 Nor dared to question where ; nor dared to cast
 One asking look — for that might be their last !

What frowns so steep in front — a cliff ? a rock ?
 The groaning vessel staggers in the shock !
 The last shriek rings.

Hark ! whence that voice they hear
 Loud o'er the rushing waters — loud and near ?

Alas! they dream! — 't is but the ocean roar
 Oh no! it echoes from the swarming shore!
 Kind Heaven, thy hand was there. With swelling bound
 The vast waves heaved the giant hull aground;
 And, ebbing with the turning tide, became,
 Like dying monsters, impotent and tame;
 Wedged in the sand, their chafing can no more
 Than lave her sides, and deaden with their roar
 The clamorous burst of joy. But some there were
 Whose joy was voiceless as their late despair —
 Whose heavenward eyes, clasp'd hands, and streaming cheeks,
 Did speak a language which the lip ne'er speaks!
 O, he were heartless, in that passionate hour,
 Who could not feel that weakness hath its power,
 When gentle woman, sobbing and subdued,
 Breathed forth her vow of holy gratitude,
 Warm as the contrite Mary's, when — forgiven —
 An angel smiled, recording it in heaven!

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

BY ALARIC A. WATTS.

I saw her in her morn of hope, in life's delicious spring,
 A radiant creature of the earth, just bursting on the wing,
 Elate and joyous as the lark when first it soars on high,
 Without a shadow in its path, — a cloud upon its sky.
 I see her yet — so fancy deems — her soft, unbraided hair,
 Gleaming like sunlight upon snow, above her forehead fair; —
 Her large dark eyes, of changing light, the winning smile that played,
 In dimpling sweetness, round a mouth Expression's self had made!
 And light alike of heart and step, she bounded on her way,
 Nor dream'd the flowers that round her bloom'd would ever know decay; —
 She had no winter in her note, but evermore would sing
 (What darker season had she proved?) of spring — of only spring!
 Alas, alas, that hopes like hers, so gentle and so bright,
 The growth of many a happy year, one wayward hour should blight; —
 Bow down her fair but fragile form, her brilliant brow o'ercast,
 And make her beauty — like her bliss — a shadow of the past!
 Years came and went — we met again, — but what a change was there
 The glossy calmness of the eye, that whisper'd of despair; —
 The fitful flushing of the cheek, — the lips compress'd and thin, —
 The clinch of the attenuate hands, — proclaim'd the strife within!
 Yet, for each ravaged charm of earth some pitying power had given
 Beauty, of more than mortal birth, — a spell that breathed of heaven; —
 And as she bent, resign'd and meek, beneath the chastening blow,
 With all a martyr's fervid faith her features seem'd to glow!
 No wild reproach, no bitter word, in that sad hour was spoken,
 For hopes deceived, for love betray'd, and plighted pled'ges broken; —
 Like Him who for his murderers pray'd, — she wept, but did not chide,
 And her last orisons arose for him for whom she died!
 Thus, thus, too oft the traitor man repays fond woman's truth;
 Thus blighting, in his wild caprice, the blossoms of her youth:
 And sad it is, in griefs like these, o'er visions loved and lost,
 That the truest and the tenderest heart must always suffer most!

THE HEBREW MOTHER.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

THE rose was in rich bloom on Sharon's plain,
 When a young mother, with her first-born, thence
 Went up to Zion ; for the boy was vow'd
 Unto the temple service. By the hand
 She led him, and her silent soul, the while,
 Oft as the dewy laughter of his eye
 Met her sweet serious glance, rejoiced to think
 That aught so pure, so beautiful, was hers,
 To bring before her God.

So pass'd they on,
 O'er Judah's hills ; and wheresoe'er the leaves
 Of the broad sycamore made sounds at noon,
 Like lulling rain-drops on the olive-boughs,
 With their cold dimness, cross'd the sultry blue
 Of Syria's heaven, she paused, that he might rest ;
 Yet from her own meek eyelids chased the sleep
 That weigh'd their dark fringe down, to sit and watch
 The crimson deepening o'er his cheek's repose,
 As at a red flower's heart ; and where a fount
 Lay, like a twilight star, midst palmy shades
 Making its banks green gems along the wild,
 There too she linger'd from the diamond wave
 Drawing clear water for her rosy lips,
 And softly parting clusters of jet curls,
 To bathe his brow.

At last the Fane was reach'd,
 The earth's one sanctuary : and rapture hush'd
 Her bosom, as before her, through the day
 It rose, a mountain of white marble, steep'd
 In light like floating gold. — But when that hour
 Waned to the farewell moment, when the boy
 Lifted, through rainbow-gleaming tears, his eye
 Beseechingly to hers, and half in fear,
 Turn'd from the white-robed priest, and round her arm
 Clung e'en as ivy clings ; the deep spring-tide
 Of nature then swell'd high ; and o'er her child
 Bending, her soul brake forth, in mingled sounds
 Of weeping and sad song — " Alas ! " she cried,

" Alas, my boy ! thy gentle gasp is on me,
 The bright tears quiver in thy pleading eyes,
 And now fond thoughts arise,
 And silver cords again to earth have won me,
 And like a vine thou claspest my full heart —
 How shall I hence depart ? —

How the lone paths retrace, where thou wert playing
 So late along the mountains at my side ?
 And I, in joyous pride,

By every place of flowers my course delaying,
Wove, e'en as pearls, the lilies round thy hair,
Beholding thee so fair !

And, oh ! the home whence thy bright smile hath parted !
Will it not seem as if the sunny day
Turn'd from its door away,
While, through its chambers wandering weary hearted,
I languish for thy voice, which past me still,
Went like a singing rill ?

Under the palm-trees thou no more shalt meet me,
When from the fount at evening I return,
With the full water urn !
Nor will thy sleep's low dove-like murmurs greet me,
As midst the silence of the stars I wake,
And watch for thy dear sake.

And thou, will slumber's dewy cloud fall round thee,
Without thy mother's hand to smooth thy bed ?
Wilt thou not vainly spread
Thine arms, when darkness as a veil hath wound thee,
To fold my neck ; and lift up, in thy fear,
A cry which none shall hear ?

What have I said, my child ? — will He not hear thee
Who the young ravens heareth from their nest ?
Will He not guard thy rest,
And, in the hush of holy midnight near thee,
Breathe o'er thy soul, and fill its dreams with joy ?
Thou shalt sleep soft, my boy !

I give thee to thy God ! — the God that gave thee,
A well-spring of deep gladness to my heart !
And, precious as thou art,
And pure as dew of Hermon, He shall have thee,
My own, my beautiful, my undefiled !
And thou shalt be His child !

Therefore, farewell ! — I go ; my soul may fail me,
As the stag panteth for the water-brooks,
Yearning for thy sweet looks !
But thou, my first-born ! droop not, nor bewail me ;
Thou in the shadow of the Rock shalt dwell,
The Rock of Strength — farewell !"

AN EVENING WALK IN BENGAL.

BY BISHOP HEBER.

Our task is done ! — on Gunga's breast
The sun is sinking down to rest :
And, moor'd beneath the tamarind bough,
Our bark has found its harbour now.
With furled sail, and painted side,
Behold the tiny frigate ride.

Upon her deck, 'mid charcoal gleams,
The Moslems' savoury supper steams,
While all apart, beneath the wood,
The Hindoo cooks his simpler food.

Come walk with me the jungle through ;
If yonder hunter told us true,
Far off in desert dank and rude,
The tiger holds his solitude ;
Nor (taught by recent harm to shun
The thunders of the English gun)
A dreadful guest, but rarely seen,
Returns to scare the village green.
Come boldly on ! no venom'd snake
Can shelter in so cool a brake ;
Child of the sun ! he loves to lie
'Mid Nature's embers, parch'd and dry,
Where o'er some tower in ruin laid,
The peepul spreads its haunted shade,
Or round a tomb his scales to wreath,
Fit warder in the gate of death !
Come on ! Yet pause ! behold us now
Beneath the bamboo's arched bough,
Where gemming oft that sacred gloom,
Glow the geranium's scarlet bloom,
And winds our path through many a bower,
Of fragrant tree and crimson flower ;
The ceiba's crimson pomp display'd
O'er the broad plantain's humbler shade,
And dusk anana's prickly blade ;
While o'er the brake, so wild and fair,
The betel waves his crest in air.
With pendent train and rushing wings,
Aloft the gorgeous peacock springs ;
And he, the bird of hundred dyes,
Whose plumes the dames of Ava prize,
So rich a shade, so green a sod,
Our English fairies never trod ;
Yet who in Indian bower has stood,
But thought on England's good green-wood ?
And bless'd, beneath the palmy shade,
Her hazel and her hawthorn glade,
And breathed a prayer (how oft in vain)
To gaze upon her oaks again.
A truce to thought ! the jackal's cry
Resounds like sylvan revelry ;
And through the trees yon falling ray
Will scantily serve to guide our way.
Yet mark ! as fade the upper skies,
Each thicket opes ten thousand eyes ;
Before, beside us, and above,
The fire-fly lights his lamp of love,
Retreating, chasing, sinking, soaring,
The darkness of the copse exploring ;
While to this cooler air confess'd
The broad Dhatura bares her breast

Of fragrant scent and virgin white,
 A pearl around the locks of night !
 Still as we pass, in soften'd hum,
 Along the breezy alleys come
 The village song, the horn, the drum,
 Still as pass, from bush and brier,
 The shrill cigala strikes his lyre ;
 And what is she, whose liquid strain
 Thrills through yon copse of sugar-cane !
 I know that soul-entrancing swell !
 It is — it must be — Philomel.

Enough, enough, the rustling trees
 Announce a shower upon the breeze, —
 The flashes of the summer sky
 Assume a deeper, ruddier dye ;
 Yon lamp that trembles on the stream,
 From forth our cabin sheds its beam ;
 And we must early sleep, to find
 Betimes the morning's healthy wind.
 But oh ! with thankful hearts confess
 E'en here there may be happiness ;
 And he, the bounteous Sire, has given
 His peace on earth — his hope of heaven.

ON SEEING A DECEASED INFANT.

BY WILLIAM B. PEABODY.

AND this is death ! how cold and still,
 And yet how lovely it appears !
 Too cold to let the gazer smile,
 And yet too beautiful for tears.
 The sparkling eye no more is bright,
 The cheek hath lost its roselike red ;
 And yet it is with strange delight
 I stand and gaze upon the dead.

But when I see the fair wide brow,
 Half shaded by the silken hair,
 That never looked so fair as now,
 When life and health were laughing there,
 I wonder not that grief should swell
 So wildly upward in the breast,
 And that strong passion once rebel,
 That need not, cannot be suppress'd.

I wonder not that parents' eyes
 In gazing thus grow cold and dim,
 That burning tears and aching sighs
 Are blended with the funeral hymn ;
 The spirit hath an earthly part,
 That weeps when earthly pleasure flies,
 And heaven would scorn the frozen heart
 That melts not when the infant dies.

And yet why mourn ? that deep repose
 Shall never more be broke by pain ;
 Those lips no more in sighs uncloze,
 Those eyes shall never weep again.
 For think not that the blushing flower
 Shall wither in the churchyard sod,
 'T was made to gild an angel's bower
 Within the paradise of God.

Once more I gaze — and swift and far
 The clouds of death in sorrow fly,
 I see thee, like a new-born star,
 Move up thy pathway in the sky :
 The star hath rays serene and bright,
 But cold and pale compared with thine ;
 For thy orb shines with heavenly light,
 With beams unfading and divine.

Then let the burthen'd heart be free,
 The tears of sorrow all be shed,
 And parents calmly bend to see
 The mournful beauty of the dead ;
 Thrice happy — that their infant bears
 To heaven no darkening stains of sin ;
 And only breathed life's morning airs
 Before its noonday storms begin.

Farewell ! I shall not soon forget !
 Although thy heart hath ceased to beat,
 My memory warmly treasures yet
 Thy features calm and mildly sweet ;
 But no, that look is not the last,
 We yet may meet where seraphs dwell,
 Where love no more deplores the past,
 Nor breathes that withering word — farewell.

HYMN OF THE MORAVIAN NUNS,

AT THE CONSECRATION OF PULASKI'S BANNER.

The standard of Count Pulaski, the noble Pole who fell in the attack upon Savannah, during the American Revolution, was of crimson silk, embroidered by the Moravian Nuns of Bethlehem, in Pennsylvania.

WHEN the dying flame of day,
 Through the chancel shot its ray,
 Far the glimmering tapers shed
 Faint light on the cowed head,
 And the censer burning swung,
 Where before the altar hung
 That proud banner, which with prayer,
 Had been consecrated there.
 And the nuns' sweet hymn was heard the while,
 Sung low in the dim mysterious aisle.

Take thy banner ! — may it wave
 Proudly o'er the good and brave,
 When the battle's distant wail
 Breaks the sabbath of our vale, —
 When the clarion's music thrills
 To the hearts of these lone hills, —
 When the spear in conflict shakes,
 And the strong lance shivering breaks.

Take thy banner ! — and beneath
 The war-cloud's encircling wreath,
 Guard it — till our homes are free —
 Guard it — God will prosper thee !
 In the dark and trying hour,
 In the breaking forth of power,
 In the rush of steeds and men,
 His right hand will shield thee then.

Take thy banner ! but when night
 Closes round the ghastly fight,
 If the vanquished warrior bow,
 Spare him ! — By our holy vow,
 By our prayers and many tears,
 By the mercy that endears ;
 Spare him — he our love hath shared —
 Spare him — as thou wouldst be spared !

Take thy banner ! — and if e'er
 Thou shouldst press the soldier's bier,
 And the muffled drum should beat
 To the tread of mournful feet,
 Then this crimson flag shall be
 Martial cloak and shroud for thee !

And the warrior took that banner proud,
 And it was his martial cloak and shroud.

ELLEN.

A FRAGMENT.

BY MISS LANDON.

Is she not beautiful, although so pale ?
 The first May flowers are not more colourless
 Than her white cheek ; yet I recall the time
 When she was call'd the rose-bud of our village.
 There was a blush, half modesty, half health,
 Upon her cheek, fresh as the summer morn
 With which she rose. A cloud of chestnut curls
 Like twilight darken'd o'er her blue-vein'd brow ;
 And through their hazel curtains eyes whose light
 Was like the violets when April skies
 Have given their own pure colour to the leaves,
 Shone sweet and silent as the twilight star.
 And she was happy ; innocence and hope

Make the young heart a paradise for love.
 And she loved and was loved. The youth was one
 That dwelt upon the waters. He had been
 Where sweeps the blue Atlantic a wide world —
 Had seep the sun light up the flowers like gems
 In the bright Indian isles — had breathed the air
 When sweet with cinnamon and gum and spice,
 But he said that no air brought health or balm
 Like that on his own hills, when it had swept
 O'er orchards in their bloom, or hedges, where
 Blossom'd the hawthorn and the honeysuckle ; —
 That, but one voyage more and he would come
 To his dear Ellen and her cottage home —
 Dwell there in love and peace. And then he kiss'd
 Her tears away, talk'd of the pleasant years
 Which they should pass together — of the pride
 He would take in his constancy ; Oh, hope
 Is very eloquent ! and as the hours
 Pass'd by their fireside in calm cheerfulness,
 Ellen forgot to weep.

At length the time
 Of parting came ; 't was the first month of spring.
 Like a green fan spread the horse-chestnut leaves,
 A shower of yellow bloom was on the elm,
 The daisies shone like silver, and the boughs
 Were cover'd with their blossoms, and the sky
 Was like an augury of hope, so clear
 So beautifully blue. Love ! O young Love !
 Why hast thou not security ? Thou art
 Like a bright river, on whose course the weeds
 Are thick and heavy ; briers are on its banks,
 And jagged stones and rocks are mid its waves
 Conscious of its own beauty, it will rush
 Over its many obstacles, and pant
 For some green valley as its quiet home.
 Either it rushes with a desperate leap
 Over its barriers, foaming passionate,
 But prison'd still ; or winding languidly
 Becomes dark, like oblivion, or else wastes
 Itself away. — This is Love's history !

They parted one spring evening : the green sea
 Had scarce a curl upon its wave ; the ship
 Rode like a Queen of Ocean. — Ellen wept,
 But not disconsolate, for she had hope ;
 She knew not then the bitterness of tears.
 But night closed in, and with the night there came
 Tempest upon the wind ; the ocean light
 Glared like a funeral pile ; all else was black
 And terrible as death. We heard a sound
 Come from the ocean — one lone signal gun,
 Asking for help in vain — follow'd by shrieks,
 Borne by the ravening gale ; then deepest silence :
 Some gallant souls had perish'd. With the first
 Dim light of morn we sought the beach ; and there
 Lay fragments of a ship, and human shapes

Ghastly and gash'd. But the worst sight of all,
 A sight of living misery, met our gaze ;
 Seated upon a rock, drench'd by the rain,
 Her hair torn by the wind, there Ellen sat,
 Pale, motionless. How could love guide her there ?
 A corpse lay by her, in her arms its head
 Found a fond pillow ; and o'er it she watch'd,
 As the young mother watches her first child.
 It was her lover.

A LAMENT FOR CHIVALRY.

ALAS ! the days of Chivalry are fled !
 The brilliant tournament exists no more !
 Our loves are cold and dull as ice or lead,
 And courting is a most enormous bore !

In those good " olden times," a " ladye bright"
 Might sit within her turret or her bower,
 While lovers sang and play'd without all night,
 And deemed themselves rewarded by a flower.

Yet, if one favour'd swain would persevere,
 In despite of her haughty scorn and laugh,
 Perchance she threw him, with the closing year,
 An old odd glove, or else a worn-out scarf.

And he a thousand oaths of love would swear,
 As, in an ecstasy, he caught the prize ;
 Then would he gallop off, the Lord knows where,
 Telling another thousand monstrous lies : —

All picturing her matchless beauty, which
 He might discern, I ween, not much about,
 Seeing he could but see her 'cross the ditch,
 As she between the lattice peeped out.

Off then, away he'd ride o'er sea and land,
 And dragons fell and mighty giants smite,
 With the tough spear he carried in his hand :
 And all to prove himself her own true knight.

Meanwhile, a thousand more, as wild as he,
 Were all employed about the selfsame thing ;
 And when each had rode hard for his " ladye,"
 They all came back and met within a ring.

Where all the men who were entitled " syr"
 Appear'd with martial air and haughty frown,
 Bearing " long poles, each other up to stir,"*
 And, in the stir up, thrust each other down.

* See Lady Morgan's chivalric defiance to the knights of the inky plume.

And then they gallop'd round with dire intent,
 Each knight resolved another's pride to humble ;
 And laughter rang around the tournament
 As oft as any of them chanced to tumble.

And when, perchance, some ill-starr'd wight might die,
 The victim of a stout unlucky poke,
 Mayhap some fair one wiped one beauteous eye,
 The rest smiled calmly on the deadly joke.

Soon then the lady, whose grim stalwart swain
 Had got the strongest horse and toughest pole,
 Bedeck'd him kneeling with a golden chain,
 And plighted troth before the motley whole.

Then trumpets sounded, bullocks whole were dress'd,
 Priests with shorn heads and lengthy beards were seen ;
 'Mid clamorous shouts the happy pair were bless'd,
 For Chivalry won Beauty's chosen queen.

And when fair daughters bloom'd like beauteous flowers,
 To bless the gallant knight and stately dame,
 They shut them up within their lonely towers,
 That squires might fight for them and win them fame.

But maidens now from hall and park are brought,
 Like Covent Garden flowers, in lots, to town :
 No more by prowess in the lists 't is sought —
 Beauty's the purchase of the wealthiest clown !

Alas ! the days of Chivalry are fled !
 The brilliant tournament exists no more !
 Men now are cold and dull as ice or lead,
 And even courtship is a dreadful bore !

THE STORM.

THE sun went down in beauty — not a cloud
 Darken'd its radiance — yet there might be seen
 A few fantastic vapours scatter'd o'er
 The face of the blue heavens ; — some fair and slight
 As the pure lawn that shields the maiden's breast ;
 Some shone like silver — some did stream afar,
 Faint and dispersed, like the pale horse's mane
 Which Death shall stride hereafter, — some were glittering
 Like dolphin's scales, touch'd out with wavering hues
 Of beautiful light — outvying some the rose,
 And some the violet, yellow, white, and blue,
 Scarlet, and purpling red. — One small lone ship
 Was seen, with outstretch'd sails, keeping its way
 In quiet o'er the deep ; — all nature seem'd
 Fond of tranquillity ; — the glassy sea
 Scarce rippled — the halcyon slept upon the wave ;
 The winds were all at rest, — and in the east
 The crescent moon, then seen imperfectly,

Came onwards, with the vesper star, to see
A summer day's decline.

The sun went down in beauty; but the eyes
Of ancient seamen trembled when they saw
A small black ominous spot far in the distance : —
It spread, and spread — larger and dark — and came
O'ershadowing the skies ; — the ocean rose ;
The gathering waves grew large, and broke in hoarse
And hollow sounds ; — the mighty winds awoke,
And scream'd and whistled through the cordage ; — birds,
That seem'd to have no home, flock'd there in terror,
And sat with quivering plumage on the mast.
Flashes were seen, and distant sounds were heard —
Presages of a storm.

The sun went down in beauty, — but the skies
Were wildly changed. — It was a dreadful night —
No moon was seen, in all the heavens, to aid
Or cheer the lone and sea-beat mariner —
Planet nor guiding star broke through the gloom ; —
But the blue lightnings glared along the waters,
As if the *Fiend* had fired his torch to light
Some wretches to their graves ; — the tempest winds
Raving came next, and in deep hollow sounds,
Like those the spirits of the dead do use
When they would speak their evil prophecies,
Mutter'd of death to come ; — then came the thunder
Deepening and crashing as 't would rend the world ;
Or, as the Deity pass'd aloft in anger,
And spoke to man — Despair ! — The ship was toss'd,
And now stood poised upon the curling billows,
And now midst deep and watery chasms, that yawn'd
As 't were in hunger, sank ; — behind there came
Mountains of moving water, — with a rush
And sound of gathering power, that did appal
The heart to look on ; — terrible cries were heard ;
Sounds of despair some, — some like a mother's anguish
Some of intemperate, dark, and dissolute joy —
Music and horrid mirth — but unallied
To joy ; — and madness might be heard amidst
The pauses of the storm — and when the glare
Was strong, rude savage men were seen to dance
In frantic exultation on the deck,
Though all was hopeless. — Hark ! the ship has struck,
And the fork'd lightning seeks the arsenal —
'T is fired — and mirth and madness are no more !
'Midst column'd smoke, deep red, the fragments fly
In fierce confusion — splinters and scorch'd limbs,
And burning masts, and showers of gold, — torn from
The heart that hugg'd it e'en till death. — Thus doth
Sicilian Etna in her angry moods,
Or Hecla, 'mid her wilderness of snows,
Shoot up their burning entrails, with a sound
Louder than that the Titans utter'd from
Their subterranean caves, when Jove enchain'd
Them, daring and rebellious. The black skies,

Shock'd at excess of light, return'd the sound
 In frightful echoes, — as if an alarm
 Had spread through all the elements — then came
 A horrid silence — deep — unnatural — like
 The quiet of the grave !

POETRY.

BY JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

THE world is full of Poetry — the air
 Is living with its spirit ; and the waves
 Dance to the music of its melodies,
 And sparkle in its brightness. Earth is veil'd
 And mantled with its beauty ; and the walls,
 That close the universe, with crystal in,
 Are eloquent with voices, that proclaim
 The unseen glories of immensity,
 In harmonies, too perfect, and too high,
 For aught but beings of celestial mould,
 And speak to man in one eternal hymn
 Unfading beauty, and unyielding power.

The year leads round the seasons, in a choir
 For ever charming, and for ever new ;
 Blending the grand, the beautiful, the gay,
 The mournful, and the tender, in one strain,
 Which steals into the heart, like sounds, that rise
 Far off, in moonlight evenings, on the shore
 Of the wide ocean resting after storms ;
 Or tones, that wind around the vaulted roof,
 And pointed arches, and retiring aisles
 Of some old, lonely minster, where the hand
 Skilful, and moved, with passionate love of art,
 Plays o'er the higher keys, and bears aloft
 The peal of bursting thunder, and then calls
 By mellow touches, from the softer tubes,
 Voices of melting tenderness, that blend
 With pure and gentle musings, till the soul,
 Commingling with the melody, is borne,
 Rapt, and dissolved in ecstasy, to Heaven.

'T is not the chime and flow of words, that move
 In measured file, and metrical array ;
 'T is not the union of returning sounds,
 Nor all the pleasing artifice of rhyme,
 And quantity, and accent, that can give
 This all pervading spirit to the ear,
 Or blend it with the movings of the soul.
 'T is a mysterious feeling, which combines
 Man with the world around him, in a chain
 Woven of flowers, and dipp'd in sweetness, till
 He tastes the high communion of his thoughts,
 With all existences, in earth and heaven,
 That meet him in the charm of grace and power.

'Tis not the noisy babbler, who displays,
 In studied phrase, and ornate epithet,
 And rounded period, poor and vapid thoughts,
 Which peep from out the cumbrous ornaments
 That overload their littleness. Its words
 Are few, but deep and solemn; and they break
 Fresh from the fount of feeling, and are full
 Of all that passion, which, on Carmel, fired
 The holy prophet, when his lips were coals,
 His language wing'd with terror, as when bolts
 Leap from the brooding tempest, armed with wrath,
 Commission'd to affright us, and destroy.

MY OWN FIRESIDE.

BY ALARIC A. WATTS.

LET others seek for empty joys,
 At ball, or concert, rout, or play;
 Whilst, far from fashion's idle noise,
 Her gilded domes, and trappings gay,
 I while the wintry eve away, —
 'Twixt book and lute the hours divide;
 And marvel how I e'er could stray
 From thee — my own Fireside!

My own Fireside! Those simple words
 Can bid the sweetest dreams arise;
 Awaken feeling's tenderest chords,
 And fill with tears of joy my eyes!
 What is there my wild heart can prize,
 That doth not in thy sphere abide,
 Haunt of my home-bred sympathies,
 My own — my own Fireside!

A gentle form is near me now;
 A small white hand is clasp'd in mine;
 I gaze upon her placid brow,
 And ask what joys can equal thine!
 A babe, whose beauty 's half divine,
 In sleep his mother's eyes doth hide; —
 Where may love seek a fitter shrine,
 Than thou — my own Fireside?

What care I for the sullen roar
 Of winds without, that ravage earth;
 It doth but bid me prize the more
 The shelter of thy hallow'd hearth; —
 To thoughts of quiet bliss give birth;
 Then let the churlish tempest chide,
 It cannot check the blameless mirth
 'That glads my own Fireside!

My refuge ever from the storm
 Of this world's passion, strife, and care;

Though thunder clouds the sky deform,
 Their fury cannot reach me there.
 There all is cheerful, calm, and fair,
 Wrath, Malice, Envy, Strife, or Pride,
 Hath never made its hated lair,
 By thee — my own Fireside!

Thy precincts are a charmed ring,
 Where no harsh feeling dares intrude;
 Where life's vexations lose their sting;
 Where even grief is half subdued;
 And Peace, the halcyon, loves to brood.
 Then let the pamper'd fool deride,
 I'll pay my debt of gratitude
 To thee — my own Fireside!

Shrine of my household deities!
 Fair scene of home's unsullied joys!
 To thee my burthen'd spirit flies,
 When fortune frowns, or care annoys:
 Thine is the bliss that never cloy;
 The smile whose truth hath oft been tried;
 What, then, are this world's tinsel toys
 To thee — my own Fireside!

Oh, may the yearnings, fond and sweet,
 That bid my thoughts be all of thee,
 Thus ever guide my wandering feet
 To thy heart-soothing sanctuary!
 Whate'er my future years may be;
 Let joy or grief my fate betide;
 Be still an Eden bright to me
 My own — MY OWN FIRESIDE!

CONSUMPTION.

BY JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

THERE is a sweetness in woman's decay,
 When the light of beauty is fading away,
 When the bright enchantment of youth is gone,
 And the tint that glow'd, and the eye that shone,
 And darted around its glance of power,
 And the lip that vied with the sweetest flower,
 That ever in Pæstum's* garden blew,
 Or ever was steep'd in fragrant dew,
 When all that was bright and fair is fled,
 But the loveliness lingering round the dead.

Oh! there is a sweetness in beauty's close,
 Like the perfume scenting the wither'd rose;
 For a nameless charm around her plays,
 And her eyes are kindled with hallow'd rays,

* Biferique rosaria Pæsti.—Vinc.

And a veil of spotless purity
 Has mantled her cheek with its heavenly dye,
 Like a cloud whereon the queen of night
 Has pour'd her softest tint of light ;
 And there is a blending of white and blue,
 Where the purple blood is melting through
 The snow of her pale and tender cheek ;
 And there are tones, that sweetly speak
 Of a spirit, that longs for a purer day,
 And is ready to wing her flight away.

In the flush of youth and the spring of feeling,
 When life, like a sunny stream, is stealing
 Its silent steps through a flowery path,
 And all the endearments that pleasure hath
 Are pour'd from her full, o'erflowing horn,
 When the rose of enjoyment conceals no thorn,
 In her lightness of heart, to the cheery song
 The maiden may trip in the dance along,
 And think of the passing moment, that lies,
 Like a fiery dream, in her dazzled eyes,
 And yield to the present, that charms around
 With all that is lovely in sight and sound,
 Where a thousand pleasing phantoms flit,
 With the voice of mirth, and the burst of wit,
 And the music that steals to the bosom's core,
 And the heart in its fulness flowing o'er
 With a few big drops, that are soon repress'd,
 For short is the stay of grief in her breast :
 In this enliven'd and gladsome hour
 The spirit may burn with a brighter power ;
 But dearer the calm and quiet day,
 When the Heaven-sick soul is stealing away.

And when her sun is low declining,
 And life wears out with no repining,
 And the whisper, that tells of early death,
 Is soft as the west wind's balmy breath,
 When it comes at the hour of still repose,
 To sleep in the breast of the wooing rose ;
 And the lip, that swell'd with a living glow,
 Is pale as a curl of new-fallen snow ;
 And her cheek, like the Parian stone, is fair,
 But the hectic spot that flushes there,
 When the tide of life, from its secret dwelling,
 In a sudden gush, is deeply swelling,
 And giving a tinge to her icy lips,
 Like the crimson rose's brightest tips,
 As richly red, and as transient too,
 As the clouds, in autumn's sky of blue,
 That seem like a host of glory met
 To honour the sun at his golden set :
 Oh, then, when the spirit is taking wing,
 How fondly her thoughts to her dear one cling,
 As if she would blend her soul with his,
 In a deep and long imprinted kiss ;

So fondly the panting camel flies,
 Where the glassy vapour cheats his eyes,
 And the dove from the falcon seeks her nest,
 And the infant shrinks to its mother's breast.
 And though her dying voice be mute,
 Or faint as the tones of an unstrung lute,
 And though the glow from her cheek be fled,
 And her pale lips cold as the marble dead,
 Her eye still beams unwonted fires
 With a woman's love and a saint's desires,
 And her last fond lingering look is given
 To the love she leaves, and then to Heaven,
 As if she would bear that love away
 To a purer world and a brighter day.

NAPOLEON MORIBUNDUS.

BY CHARLES MACARTHY.

Sume superblam
 Quæsitam merita.

Yes! bury me deep in the infinite sea,
 Let my heart have a limitless grave;
 For my spirit in life was as fierce and free
 As the course of the tempest-wave.

As far from the stretch of all earthly control
 Were the fathomless depths of my mind;
 And the ebbs and flows of my single soul
 Were as tides to the rest of mankind.

Then my briny pall shall engirdle the world,
 As in life did the voice of my fame;
 And each mutinous billow that's sky-ward curl'd
 Shall seem to re-echo my name.

That name shall be storied in annals of crime
 In the uttermost corners of earth;
 Now breathed as a curse — now a spell-word sublime,
 In the glorified land of my birth.

Ay! plunge my dark heart in the infinite sea;
 It would burst from a narrower tomb;
 Shall less than an ocean his sepulchre be
 Whose mandate to millions was doom?

 THE END OF TIME.

And I saw another mighty Angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud ; and a rainbow was upon his head ; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and cried with a loud voice. And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to Heaven : and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created Heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things that therein are, that there should be time no longer !

REVELATIONS, Chap. x.

I SAW an Angel on a cloud,
Come floating through the air ;
The Heaven's look'd like the world's dark shroud,
All blacken'd with despair :
With mighty stride he stalked forth,
Encompassing the south and north,
And eke the middle clime ;
Earth reel'd beneath his ponderous weight,
The ocean roll'd all agitate,
Tumultuous and sublime.

A garb of light he round him cast,
Blended with Heaven's pure blue ;
And thunder's blighting, withering blast,
He round his pathway threw :
Heaven's radiant, arch entwined his brow
(Which shone forth with a heavenly glow
Of majesty divine),
Seal of the Covenant firm and sure,
That through all ages shall endure,
Until the end of time.

The Heavens drew back to let him pass, —
With terror hence they fled ;
All wither'd was the vernal grass, —
The sea laid bare its bed :
The mountains skipped to and fro,
Threat'ning the vales to overthrow, —
The troubled world did groan ;
The sun withdrew his glittering rays,
Quenched beneath the brighter blaze,
That round the Angel shone.

Upon a mountain's rugged height
He fix'd his left foot sure, —
And on the ocean's waves so bright
Planted his right secure :
With arms uplifted to the sky,
He swore, by Him who reigns on high,
Girded with might and power :
And who created earth and sea
In all their vast immensity, —
That — Time should be no more !

Earth quaked at the fatal sound,
 And to its centre shook, —
 It reach'd creation's utmost bound ;
 Then with majestic look,
 He stretch'd his arm up to the sun,
 And thence pull'd forth that mighty one,
 And hurl'd him to the sea :
 The moon grew pale with wild affright,
 The stars withdrew their glimmerin g light, —
 For light no more could be !

The mountains melted to their base,
 The Heavens fled away ;
 The sea could find itself no place,
 Where it might longer stay :
 Mankind in wild confusion fled,
 The living mingling with the dead, —
 Thrones and dominions fell :
 The huge ship sank into the wave,
 Ingulf'd in ocean's yawning grave, —
 Buried beneath its swell !

The light still dim and dimmer grew,
 Till swallowed up in night ;
 And then the Angel, to my view,
 Shone like a meteor bright ;
 The tempest ceased its raging breath, —
 All nature yielded up to death,
 The earth, the sky, the sea :
 A dark cloud rose upon my sight,
 And shrouded all in tenfold night, —
 'T was blank Eternity !

LOVE.

BY HENRY NEELE.

Love is a plant of holier birth,
 Than any that takes root on earth ;
 A flower from heaven, which 't is a crime
 To number with the things of time ;
 Hope in the bud is often blasted,
 And beauty on the desert wasted ;
 And joy, a primrose early gay,
 Care's lightest foot-fall treads away.

But love shall live, and live for ever,
 And chance and change shall reach it never ;
 Can hearts in which true love is plighted,
 By want or wo be disunited ?
 Ah ! no ; like buds on one stem born,
 They share between them even the thorn
 Which round them dwells, but parts them not ;
 A lorn, yet undivided lot.

Can death dis sever love, or part
 The loved one from the lover's heart?
 No, no; he does but guard the prize
 Sacred from moral injuries,
 Making it purer, holier seem,
 As the ice closing o'er the stream,
 Keeps, while storms ravage earth and air,
 All baser things from mingling there.

THE DYING EXILE.

BY EDMUND READE.

FAREWELL — a long farewell to thee,
 My own, my native land!
 Now would to God that I were free
 Upon thy rugged strand!
 If but for one last look to bless
 Thy hills and deep-blue sky,
 And all my love for thee confess:
 Then lay me down and die.

But now I am alone, and none
 Will hear when I am dead:
 Perchance ere sets that glorious Sun,
 My spirit shall be fled!
 I watch him yet — and faintly smile
 In death, to think that he
 Will rise so bright upon that isle,
 Where I may never be!

My Country! while I bless thee, how
 My feelings in me swell:
 Alas, I never knew till now
 I loved thee half so well!
 But when alone among strange men,
 When friends forget, and false ones flee;
 Something the heart *must* love, and then
 It can but turn to thee!

Farewell, farewell! the sun's last gleams
 Are sinking in the sea;
 Along the shore the sea-bird screams,
 Unheard, unreck'd by me;
 I feel my ebbing breath decay,
 And fail my darkening sight:
 Yet ere I pass away, away,
 My native land — good night!

THE END.

Hall, Anna Maria (Fielding) 'Mrs. S. C. Hall

TALES

OF

WOMAN'S TRIALS.

BY

MRS. S. C. HALL.

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TO

The Marchioness of Lansdowne,

THIS VOLUME

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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THE WIFE OF TWO HUSBANDS.

THE TRIALS OF MARIAN RAYMOND.

"How high he mounts! Hark, Henry; we hear him still. Sure then I can fancy that bird like Hope, soaring — soaring — soaring up, and up, till he reaches Heaven —"

"Which he will never do;" responded Henry O'Donnell to his fair cousin. "Do you not see that hawk, tracing its pathway through the clouds, as the greyhound tracks the hare upon the earth?"

Marian shaded her deep-blue eyes from the rays of the glorious sun. The song of the bird had ceased, as it changed its course, descending towards the meadows for the safety which the skies denied it.

"What a glorious chase!" observed the young sportsman, as he watched the issue.

"Fire, fire, dear Harry!" exclaimed Marian. "Ah! do now! the monster gains upon the bird; do fire."

"Nay, Marian, you know not what sport is," replied the youth, coolly and slowly raising his piece. "What a noble bird he is! 'T is a pity to bring him down till the chase is ended."

"Fire, Harry, fire," interrupted Marian, "oh, fire! There now, dear, dear Harry. Oh! the poor lark is struck. Fire, fire, if you love me!"

Quick as lightning the mandate of death sent the hawk tumbling through the air; and, almost at the same moment, the little singing bird, wounded and struggling, fell on the grassy turf at the maiden's feet.

"Had you fired sooner, the lark would have been saved!" she exclaimed, tenderly taking it in her hand. "Now — it will never sing again! — its nest, too, I know is in the furze. What will become of its poor mate! — Alas! my simile was indeed naught — how unlike Hope is this dying bird!"

Many tears flowed over Marian Raymond's blooming cheek as she watched the last agonies of the woodlark. Harry would have taken it from her, but she retained it to the last, and then raising a portion of the turf, placed it in its rest. The tears of youth are easily excited, and flow — without long gathering in their shining fountains. Their source, at the time of sorrow, seems inexhaustible; — yet they soon cease. April's sunshine and showers convey but little idea of the rapid succession of smiles and tears on a cheek that has only numbered sixteen summers. Marian, shaking back the raven curls that clustered over her white forehead, looked into her cousin's face, as cheerfully as if she had never known a moment's grief.

"When I go to England, and join my regiment, Marian," said Henry, as they proceeded homeward to Castle Raymond, "you will not, I hope, forget me, — years *must* pass ere I return — but you *will* still think of me, and be my little wife — will you not?"

Marian held down her beautiful head, and replied not.

"I wish you would promise never to love but me, and then I should go gladly to the wild wars, and return — a general and a hero."

"Return a hero, Harry, and I shall be satisfied."

"No, Marian — a general for your sake — a hero for my own."

"Selfish boy! — so you prefer the greater glory for yourself."

"Not so — but you must never be a poor man's wife! Young as I am, I know enough of human nature to see that you will be courted — admired — flattered — and all more for your beauty than your fortune; although you are an heiress."

A peculiar expression of scorn, amounting almost to bitterness, curled the maiden's lip, as she repeated — "Heiress! — Oh, yes — I shall doubtless be an heiress; but what, Harry, what shall I inherit! right noble blood — the cold-hearted cannot expel that from my veins; a spotless name — no act but mine own can tarnish that. What else? — Alas! Harry, the mouldering walls of yonder castle, which to my ancestors was indeed a tower of strength, is now but a fitting abode for the wilder inhabitants of earth and air. My father, with that improvidence which you tell me characterizes the Irish nation, has never retrenched a single expenditure, even since the Ballanamoye estate was irrecoverably mortgaged — and at this moment I know that he is pressed by encumbrances on every side."

"An English gentleman, if so circumstanced, would sell off a part to clear what remained."

Marian shook her head. — "Dwelling so much among the English lately, Harry, has made you an alien to our feelings and our customs: here I stand, the last descendant of the house of Raymond; the hills of four counties that were ours are in sight; two bright and fertilizing rivers paid us tribute; and many hundred men followed us, when needed, in camp and field: — behold to what a handful our property, or, what is nominally our property, is reduced! the birch wood to the left — the ruins of Castle Cloyne, with its almost deserted village, to the right — the black bog, stretching in sluggish sloth along yonder hollow — and my own beloved mouldering castle, with its suffocated moat, its broken windows, its crumbling walls, and its ivy towers: — which, of all the objects I have mentioned, could my father part with?"

"Sir Charles Barnett's agent is instructed to give any sum your father thought fit to demand for Castle Raymond."

"And has the Sassenach!" exclaimed the proud Irish girl, who, not ten minutes before, was weeping, as if her heart would break, over a stricken lark — "has he presumed thus to insult us? If the Englishman were but here, I would look him into dust, and —"

"Ashes," interrupted her companion, with a want of tact, or rather feeling, which is pretty much the same in outward seeming, that paid no respect to her excited imagination. "My dear Marian, when I am a general, you shall come with me to England, where they value warm commodious houses more than old castles — and — but you are not angry with me again, sweet girl? Surely you know I would not willingly cause you a moment's pain; although I lament — lament most deeply, that your wild enthusiasm and uncalculating habits will lead — to much misery."

"Thank you for your prophecy, Henry."

"Dearest Marian, — I have named your only fault — and what a host of virtues do you possess to counterbalance that, which experience will soon eradicate, and leave you all perfection!"

"It is very strange," replied Marian, after a pause, and with that delightful naïveté, which fades from the heart as the blush from the cheek, with this sad difference, that, when once departed, the blush returns, the feeling — never; "it is very strange, that, while you see so many faults in me, I think you perfect — you are certainly much wiser — and I know that, when

you go, I shall want a friend so much! — there's my dear father — he is my friend, of course — yet he talks of nothing but Oliver Cromwell and the Battle of the Boyne — the bane and glory of our ancestors — and — I may say it to you, Harry, who know him so well — drinks so much, that he is no heart-friend for a girl like me."

"Am I a heart-friend, Marian?"

"Be easy, do. — Then my poor nurse! — she tells such delightful fairy tales — but the worst of it is that the half of them are made up."

"I should think they were."

"Now, Harry, don't tease me — I assure you, Nurse Grady's mother saw — why, I declare, there goes Busca hot-foot after the gray cat!"

"And there goes Marian Raymond after both," soliloquized Henry O'Donnell; "blessed, blessed girl — tenderness, love, pride, and gayety of soul and spirit, free from every taint of evil, dwell together in that noble breast: would that I could call you all mine own — I wish you had not the reputation of wealth, for then, even now you might be a seldier's bride — and, if so wedded, how quickly could I win a way to riches and to honour!"

The youth folded his arms over his gun across his breast, and leaned against a noble oak, which the lightning of by-gone years had despoiled of its topmost branches. It was a fine contrast — the tree, magnificent in decay, scorning in its greatness the very power which had levelled its antlers to the green and humble plain; and the youth, whose dark eye drank in the rays of the setting sun, and whose erect and finely-proportioned figure told of prowess of no common order. Youth and age are, either in the natural or the moral world, the most interesting stages of existence; middle age is too worldly-minded — too busied with thought and occupation — too well able to take care of itself — to create the sympathy which is felt for the young and the very old: we look on the former with hope, on the latter with veneration; we pray for both, and feel equal interest in the sunrise and sunset of life.

Henry O'Donnell was rich in all things but the gifts of fortune; he had been brought up by Marian's father as his own child, and the old gentleman had used his interest to get him educated and provided for in the only profession which, according to his theory, a gentleman could enter. Mr. Raymond was one of the few survivors of a race of Irish country-gentlemen now, I believe, extinct; I may add, of a race, which the much lauded and much talked of "march of intellect," would have crushed beneath its gigantic strides as a prelude to its utility, if it had not before that supernatural creation made its appearance, faded from the earth, and become a portion of the Emerald turf, that is, or rather was, the idol of every true-born Irishman. Mr. Raymond was tall and handsome, though his countenance expressed bravery, generosity, and good temper, rather than intellect or observation; his forehead was high, but not broad; and his eyes large and lustrous, but deficient in expression; he was, even in advanced life, a great adept in all sports connected with flood and field — kept a flight of hawks, and the best fox-hounds in the country — until literally obliged to part, before he mortgaged his best estate, with his splendid pack, from inability to support them. An English noble would have sent them to Tattersall's for sale; but Raymond scorned sales and salesmen — so he gave them away, and hunted no more: poor Marian used to say, he broke his heart when the plough broke up his dog-kennel; and I believe she was right — he certainly drank more claret after dinner than when he followed the hounds; and when his wine-merchant objected to his having any more pipes of that regal wine, because his bill had not been paid for more than eight years, Mr. Raymond chastised him severely for his insolence; and, to punish him more effectually, vowed a vow, which he religiously kept, never to drink anything in future but whiskey-punch. Of this most wicked

deverage he certainly drank enough ; and, as it invariably weakens the intellect, and excites a temporary madness when indulged in, the old gentleman, kind, considerate, and affectionate, in the morning, became proud, tyrannical, almost brutal, in the evening. No wonder poor Marian should regret her cousin's departure ; the little acquaintance she had with books and accomplishments she owed to Henry O'Donnell. Henry invariably strung her harp, and corrected her drawings. Her companions were few, and unsuited to her taste and feelings ; she was refined both by nature and habit — for her father, with all his peculiarities, had a just idea of female propriety. Mr. Raymond's politics were stern and unbending ; offensive from their violence, even to his own party, and, of course, calculated to make him bitter enemies among those entertaining opposite opinions. Descended from a line of ancestors who had ever directed their minds to the arrangement of the national affairs, while their own were considered perfectly beneath their notice, the last of the name inherited the prejudices and habits of his progenitors without their wealth ; and truly had Marian pointed out to her cousin the narrow boundaries of their once wide estates. Notwithstanding his habits, his eccentricities, and his increasing embarrassments, there were many who venerated and esteemed his good qualities. The Irish peasantry, with all their cunning and many faults, are, in heart and practice, the most generous people on the face of the earth — poverty with them is no sin.

"Shane," exclaimed a poor woman to her husband, as the master of Castle Raymond, but indifferently mounted, passed up the hill of Cloyne, "run out, agra ! — here, put on yer hat, Shane, that ye may have the satisfaction of pulling it off to a raal gentleman — and, Shane, take the childer out wid ye — now mind yer bows and yer curtsies, ye pack o' gaffers ; always pay respect to dacent blood ; it's but little of it's going these bad times, and more's the pity. Thank God and the Vargin, we want nothing from his honour — but it's a great satisfaction to one's self to show proper respect to the ginty, especially when they're down in the world." Mr. Raymond passed on, after exchanging salutations with the peasant, and praising his children. "His honour's not like himself, somehow," continued the loquacious dame ; "they say he can't keep on the ould castle, and that the rain comes in through the roof, — and Nurse Grady tells nothing, barring a word now and then — she's desperate cute — only I think by her that Miss Marian is over fond of her cousin, and her cousin of her ; and if so, I don't see why they should n't be married at once — if they wait to get rich, they may wait long enough ; and, sure, two can battle the poverty better nor one." This is the Irish maxim, and much of Irish misery can be traced to its influence ; the perfect heedlessness with which the poor unite hands and hearts has its origin in this pernicious belief. Our friend's husband perfectly agreed in his wife's opinion, although both were suffering from the effects of the evil principle ; and he contented himself with adding, "It's enough to make his honour look quare, to have that English Sir Charles Barnett coming here on a visit to his agent, with his dogs, and his horses, and his sarvents, like the Lord Mayor o' Dublin, Nelly, kivered with goold and silver, and his out-riders, and all in the teeth of the counthrey — and he nothing but a bit of a banker — a pen-cutter, after all. Blessed Mary ! it here an't the whole gang of them coming up the hill, as sure as my name's Shane Ryley."

"And sure, yer not going to salute the likes o' him," exclaimed Nelly ; "come in doors, do — here Paddy, Nerry, Looney, Katty, Kelly, every child o' ye, whether mine or not — come off the dunghill, every one o' ye, and in wid ye — sorra a bow or a scrape shall ye ever make to them that's beneath ye. There, Katty ! if you want to see the fine coach, bad luck to it ! pull the lock o' straw out of the ind windey, and ye'll have the sight

and the dust together. The poor young lady's the most to be pitied; she's had no mother over her for many a long year — babbies dear, what would ye do without your mammy!" And the "babbies," fat, rosy, dirty brats, kissed their mother with more pure affection than the pink-lipped well-bred offspring of the great and wealthy deem it right to evince towards their courtly parents.

If Nelly Riley did not possess philosophy, she was gifted with forethought; "the poor young lady" was the most to be pitied, because she had imbibed correct and just notions, that enabled her to see the error of her father's ways, without possessing the power either to alter or improve them. Her calm and beautiful mother, whose portrait smiled so placidly upon her from the cold and mouldering wall of their spacious and dreary reception-room, had taken all things tranquilly: she loved her husband, and believed that whatever he did was necessary to support his dignity. An English lady so situated, would have considered her life a life of trial; but Mrs. Raymond took it for granted that trades-people who dunned were very impertinent, and deserved punishment instead of pay; that it was not at all wrong for Mr. Raymond to drink claret to excess, because all gentlemen did the same; that it would be exceedingly mean to keep, much less investigate, accounts; and that the *entrée* at "The Castle," and four grays to draw her through the beautiful woods of her domain, formed the summit of human happiness. Her body was as fragile as her mind; she died one summer morning in consequence of taking a cold bath instead of a warm one, and her husband drank a double quantity of claret during the next three months, for sorrow that she had departed, leaving him a daughter and not a son. Many wondered he did not marry again, and it was reported that he had proposed in a very high quarter, and been refused: — be that as it may, from the day she entered her teens, Marian Raymond had been considered and treated as the mistress of Raymond Castle.

It was about two years after the stricken lark died upon her hand, that Marian was seated near a small table which supported her father's elbow; the evening sun had not set, and its beams scattered a variety of tints over the antique room, whose furniture, time-worn and moth-eaten, showed harshly in the garish light; the shadows on the wall looked strange and uncouth, and the noble old greyhound, crouching at his master's feet, gazed with "lack-lustre eye" up to the face of his young mistress. Poor Busca had long been blind, but the creature's fidelity was all the same; and if he had lost one sense in the service to which he was so ardently devoted, he gave to the other four work in proportion to make up for the deficiency. He was swift of foot as ever, his scent as keen, and his hearing as perfect, as when, in his younger days, he accompanied his friend Harry along the vales and over the mountains of Kerry. Marian sat near the table, on which were placed the ordinary appendages for the manufacture of punch, but they remained untouched, and the master of Raymond's head leaned upon his bosom: Marian's eyes were glazed within their sockets, from whence they looked straight out upon the landscape, without, it would seem, the power of noting herb, or tree, or flower; her hands and arms rested on her lap, and the paper she had been reading lay at her feet; her luxuriant hair burst from the slight blue riband that had confined its abundance, and fell in rich shadowy masses over her neck and shoulders — every feature told that she had received a sudden and fearful shock, and her cheek and lips were as white as monumental marble.

The father and daughter continued in this state of intense agony for nearly an hour, when the old oak door creaked upon its hinges, and Mr.

an's nurse entered. In conformity with an Irish custom still venerated, she had remained in the house since her young lady's birth, the plague and amusement of the servants, and the humble companion, confidant, and adviser of her mistress.

"Och wrrasthrou! and is it thrue! Och, Miss, machree, is it the thruth intirely, that the young mather's gone from us? — I can't belave the post-ma'n's news — and sure the whole kitchen's in a flood o' tears, and every thing in the house broken-hearted. Oh tell me, Miss, honey, if indeed it's on the paper that Master Harry's missing?"

Still Marian remained as before; and Mr. Raymond made no reply.

"Och, ma vourneen, you are Miss Marian! Ah! then, put the stare out of your beautiful eyes, and spake to your poor nurse — sure you 're the only comfort I have now in the wide world — Mather, spake to her, she 'll mind you," continued the affectionate creature, really alarmed at the rigidity and coldness of the hand which she clasped to her bosom, — "Mather, Mather! Miss Marian's dying — Och, wisha, wisha, you poor stupid ould jintleman!" she added, in an under tone, "what will I do — Busca, Busca! you baste, if you war not blind, you'd call her to herself, and lick her face, and howl; for sure, it's good rason you have, and yer young master dead." The poor animal, as if understanding her appeal, raised itself on its hind-legs, placed its fore-paws on Marian's lap, and, turning its sightless eyes upwards, uttered a howl so piteous and so mournful, that Mr. Raymond started from his stupor, and half rose from his seat. The creature, when its wail was ended, first licked the hands of its mistress, and placing its face next hers, uttered a low moaning caressing noise, applying his cold nose to her cheek, with a tenderness which, of all the brute creation, dogs only possess. This succeeded in rousing her paralyzed feelings — she folded her arms round the animal's neck, and, bursting into a torrent of tears, exclaimed, "Your poor master, Busca!"

"Take away these things, Nurse Grady, and don't let any one but yourself wait upon us this evening," said Mr. Raymond, as the twilight deepened.

But, Sir, honey, you have-n't so much as wet your lips with the punch!" replied the nurse in astonishment, seeming to think that if he did not take his punch he must be ill indeed. "Sure, you 'll go to the bad intirely with the grief, if you do n't take a drop now and agin."

"I shall do that whether or no," replied the old gentleman, faintly smiling — "No, nurse, I have much to say, much to do to-night; and it must be said one time or other."

"The only drop o' comfort for us all now is, that he may have been taken prisoner," said Nurse Grady.

"He was too brave for that," murmured Marian, in one of those low whispers that thrill to the very heart — "too — all too brave — I might have known it — and often did I pray to the God of battles to protect —" Her voice died away, and though her utterance was imperfect, still her cousin's name mingled with the tears that came to the relief of her bursting heart.

"Let her talk — let her talk — it will do her good — it does good to man or woman, but especially to woman. Och, but her throuble is great; and no wonder. Oh, Sir, Sir, honey, to think he was reared for the slaughter!" said Nurse Grady.

The accounts were but too correct. No trace of Henry O'Donnell had been discovered after the fatal battle of Albuera, though a friend, a young ensign, who was by his side during the engagement, had searched for his body in every direction, and though he distinctly recognised the spot where, in the act of encouraging his men, the gallant fellow had been cut down by a French sabre.

To poor Marian it was indeed a bitter trial ; and though in after-life she encountered many, yet none struck her so forcibly as this : he was her first, her only affection — in childhood she had loved him as a brother, and time had knit their hearts with love ; to him all her hopes were directed — he was the planet round which all her affections, all her thoughts, revolved. Her father had noted the growing attachment, but considered it as a mere juvenile feeling, which a little time and experience would destroy. He had some prudential thoughts, as regarded his daughter's future establishment, and trusted to time and absence, and the Irishman's god — Chance — to wear it out. Harry O'Donnell, his step-sister's child, with nothing but his sword to win his way to glory, could neither retrieve the Raymond estates from jeopardy, nor add new honours to the name : he had, therefore, made up his mind to regard and serve Harry as a nephew, never as a son ; and was therefore greatly shocked at perceiving the effect produced on his daughter by the account of his death. Though he sorrowed much, he was perplexed and sorely tormented at the knowledge, which broke upon him for the first time, that Marian really loved her cousin — loved him with the deep and intense love which dies but with the heart. The master of Castle Raymond was but little skilled in human nature, or he would have known that it would have been far better to suffer Marian's feelings to calm down into something like resignation before he spoke to her of any future plans, and, above all, of the possibility of her forming another attachment ; but he fancied that the present was the best, and, moreover, he had dispensed with his accustomed beverage, and was not willing to run the risk of keeping a cool head for two nights, when the sacrifice of one to the god of temperance might surely be deemed sufficient. Under any other circumstances he would have mourned more deeply for his nephew, though it must be confessed that the young man's English habits and independent ideas jarred much with the old gentleman's preconceived and hereditary notions : — a certain fearlessness of character having rendered poor Harry less careful of wounding his uncle's prejudices than was consistent with his own interests.

"Perhaps, my dear Marian," commenced Mr. Raymond, — "perhaps I had better not mention our affairs this evening, although they concern me so very nearly."

"I will listen now, dearest father — now, or at any time, to aught that affects you. Busca — poor Busca — here, rest your head upon my lap — his hand will never caress you more !"

"Where is the spaniel — the pretty Blenheim, Sir Charles Barnett sent you, Marian ? it is a fitter pet, I think, than that great hound."

Marian looked into her father's face, as if doubtful that she heard aright, and while her pale cheek crimsoned, made no reply, but by pressing her lips on the dog's head.

"My dear child, I have this day fathomed what I could not before understand ; the cause of your coolness to Sir Charles Barnett — a gentleman — an *English* gentleman to be sure, but still a gentleman, and, I must say, a man of liberal feelings — a man of sound political views, too — never contradicted me in his life ; poor dear Harry would always have an opinion of his own ! But Sir Charles is a steady man, of good family, too, in its way, and old enough to take care of the main chance ; rich as a Jew, and not purse-proud, wishing, as you know, our families to be united, which proves his respect for ancestry, and, I must confess, makes me respect him in return." He paused for a reply, but Marian offered no observation, her lips still rested upon the brow of the noble hound, and Mr. Raymond continued, — "I suppose some girlish and boyish engagement passed between you and Harry ?"

Another pause, and no reply.

"Then, I must say, I think it was very dishonourable of him — to —"

"Father!" interrupted Marian, springing on her feet in an instant, and clasping her hands with startling energy—"Father, name not him and dishonour in the same breath—purify your heart and lips from such a conception and such an utterance—Dishonour and Henry O'Donnell were never before blended. And you, too, who so well knew him, within these walls, in this very room, where so often he has corrected my faults, and directed my wandering thoughts to the right path—these walls to hear the blasphemy of that dear name——!" Then, as if thinking that to her father she had said too much, the poor girl threw herself at his feet, and bending her head to the earth, sobbed out a petition that he would retract his words, and forgive the agony which drove her to such extremes.

Mr. Raymond folded her to his bosom, greatly shocked at a violence which he had so little anticipated; and said every thing that occurred to him to convince her he meant nothing that could sully O'Donnell's reputation in the least.

"We will talk of this another time, my child," he said tenderly; "but it must be soon, very soon, Marian—very soon, or you will see your father within the county jail, a prisoner—a prisoner, Marian, for paltry debts."

She pressed her hands to her forehead, and at last murmured—"Father! I understand you now—and now I cannot bear more—not to-night, but to-morrow, father—to-morrow, or the next day. God help me, and direct me for the best. Good night, dear father. You believe that he was incapable of a dishonourable thought, and you forgive my petulance. Now bless me, father—bless me, for I have need of blessing." She sank on her knees, and her unhappy and ruined parent pronounced as fervent a blessing as ever passed from human lips.

"Do not think of a jail, father. What have I to live for now?"

As she passed from the apartment, the little spaniel, Sir Charles's present, met her at the door, and fawned upon her as was his custom, for all things loved her well; she spurned him from her, and the creature ran yelling through the hall. The sound smote upon her ear—"God forgive me!" she ejaculated; "Satan is busy at my heart." She crossed the vestibule; the rusty armour, and the disarranged fishing and other sporting implements, appeared dropping from the neglected walls; the splendid lamp, which had once shed its many-coloured light over the marble pavement, hung, broken and dangling, from the painted and cobwebbed ceiling; the spacious fireplace, round which a hundred followers had often crouched, exhibited rusty bars and broken fragments of stone; and as she passed it, the bright and glittering eyes of a starved rat, that had been prowling for prey, glared upon her with their poisoning light: she shuddered with superstitious dread from the influence of the unclean animal, nor did she breathe freely until, standing on the green slope leading to the castle gardens, she fixed a long and piercing gaze upon the blue sky, studded with its starry worlds; there was his planet, glorious among the many, shining in its white raiment of brilliant light—fully and splendidly shining, not beneath a cloud, but standing out in the heavens, as if in triumph! Will poor Marian be accused of weak-mindedness if it is confessed that the brightness of the star communicated hope to her heart? She wandered among the tangled plantations, with her eyes still fixed upon the shining orb, until she found herself on the moor beyond the gardens. Her foot struck against a mound of earth, and when she looked down she found herself on the very spot where she had placed the dead lark beneath the turf. After that little incident, with girlish romance, she had planted two white rose-trees on the tiny grave, to prove, as she laughingly assured her cousin, her theory to be correct; for that the spirit of the lark would mingle with the perfume of the roses, and teach them to mount the skies. Harry too smiled at, if not with, her. The rose-trees grew and flourished; and now, in the decline of summer, the grass

was strewed with their white leaves ; she stooped to see if one remained that she could gather ; and when she raised her head, she saw that the white clouds which had been careering, like the sea-foam, through the heavens, had obscured the brightness of his natal star ! — it was too much for her excited imagination, and she sunk upon the spot where, two years before, her hopeful emblem had met with an untimely end. Let no one make sport of youthful sorrow — it is the bitterest we are doomed to endure in our course through life : the trials of after age are, doubtless, more real, but not so intense — they are of the world, worldly — it is seldom they are unselfish — rarely untutored. Let any of us recall the devotedness of our first *real* grief, the anguish of our first *real* disappointment, and remember how literally it was deep and heartfelt — how perfectly mind and body were stricken during its continuance, and then, in justice to fast-coming memories, we can never make sport of early sorrows.

“ And here you are, *a-lannan*, and your beautiful hair wet with the night dew — after myself, and the whole house seeking for ye, in every hole and corner, up and down, in and out. What brought ye here intirely ? Och, my grief ! Come in, *Astòr ma chree*, and go into your comfortable bed, and do n’t take on so, though great is your throuble ; sure, my dear, we are born, all of us, without asking our laves, and we die — rich and poor, great and small, in the same way. Och, my bonny bird ! it’s a grief to my heart that you war not brought up in the thrue religion — for sure, a trifle of patters and avys would make ye so comfortable ! The master thinks you asleep, and niver a wink on yer eye, no more than on the lady moon, who’s blessing us with her light. Maybe, after all, he’s not dead — who knows, but a little time will tell ! ”

A little time, and a long time, passed, and told nothing — nothing was heard of Henry O’Donnell. His companions in arms had ceased to think of him — his uncle wished to forget that ever he existed — the old nurse even had taken the hue and character of the times, and spoke of him no more. Autumn with its golden sceptre tinged the woods with divers and magnificent colours — the swallows had deserted their haunts by the tranquil lake and the wooded hills — the song of the reaper, and the glad whistle of the blithesome blackbird, no longer danced amid the valleys. Winter came, stealthily at first, sprinkling the earth with frosty diamonds, and nipping the young buds that ventured forth from their mystic enclosures — then, in his ice-car, he mounted the hurricane, and capped the mountains with his snows. Spring — lovely, all-healing Spring — with its young sunshine, and gentle showers, succeeded ; the hill was green, the violets blue, the cowslips mingled their blossoms with the furze, the golden catkins hung from the birchen woods, over the blossoms of the timid and trembling anemone ; the fly-a-way birds came back to their old habitations with unsoiled wings and unruffled plumage, as if they had never wandered, —

“ The elm-tree blossom’d o’er the brooding bird,
And wild and wide the plover’s wail was heard.”

The seasons had changed ; but in Marian Raymond there was no change, “ neither shadow of turning ” — Did I say, no change ? I did her injustice ; her beautiful head, which at first had been bowed to the earth, had risen into an erect and statue-like dignity, as she had said — “ Here I and sorrow sit.” She had learned, from commune with her noble self, to meet, not sink beneath, her destiny ; her cheek had settled into extreme paleness, and her eye gained in strength what it lost in brightness. The summer had seen her a wild, ardent, trembling girl ; the succeeding spring found her a cold mannered, dignified woman, whose lips were rarely known to smile, and in whose eyes no tears were ever seen ; yet she loved Henry

more deeply, and as tenderly as ever — in that one sentiment she was unchanged.

"And they all seemed to love him too," she exclaimed, in the solitude of her dreary chamber; "I thought it was real, and that they would have laid down life for Harry — yet but one remembers him besides myself — his poor, poor dog!"

"Och, Mistress Grady! an' I'm heart glad to see ye," said Nelly Riley of Cloyne. "Sit down, Ma'am — and is it thrue that your Miss is to be married after all to that English barrow-knight, who's ould enough to be her father, and has nothin' in him but the spirit of a tame nigger? — he'd take a penny out of a blind man's hat."

"Indeed, then, Nelly Riley, I take it to be an ill pattrern of your manners to say the likes o' that to one who's coming into our family, and has good blood in his veins; sure, then, ye little know what he'd do for the sake of the young Mistress."

"Maybe I do know, Mrs. Grady; do n't I know how (God look down upon her!) she's been drooping all the winther; do n't I know how the brain faver came upon her, a laughing girl, and left her a sober, heart-struck woman; do n't all the counthrey know how the poor Masther (more's the pity) has been distressed; do n't we know how the jaws of the law (*bad luck to it!*) has been stretched open for him! and do n't we see that he's stuffing his daughter betwixt to stop its mouth? Sure, every gaffer in his whole town land knows that Sir Charles wanted to buy the estate long ago, and has money enough in the Limerick bank, and the Waterford bank, and the big bank in Dublin, to say nothing of his outlandish banks, to buy fifty estates like it; but he wanted the lady too, for he could get nothing in England like her, the ould, dressed-up, buckram-stiffened, face-painted dandy. You need n't grizzle, like a pea on a griddle, Mrs. Grady, it's the truth I'm tellin', and I do n't care who hears it; but this I know, if the poor young gentleman had n't been killed, she'd ha' seen Castle Raymond down the Shannon (and my blissing to her for that same) before she'd ha' sould herself to that English thingumby, what you call barrow-knight."

"You're a blaspheming ould woman, to talk that way of Castle Raymond; and you're a poor desaved craythur, too, for I can tell ye that, though Sir Charles is an Englishman, (which counthrey, you'll agree, is preferable before the world, afther Ireland,) he has a generous spirit of his own, when there's occasion for it."

"I see how it is, nurse, and why yer two good-looking shoulders stick out so grand, under yer beautiful Injee shawl; but I'd scorn to be bribed, poor as I am; and, yer remimber I tell ye, that though grand she may be, rich she may be, yet ye'll niver see the smile on her lip so bright, or her steps so dancing, as when she went wandering, like a blessed bird, over these hills, with him whose grave was made without cross or prayer to mark it in the far counthrey."

"Nelly," replied Nurse Grady, "you're not a larned woman, so I can't blame ye; but you may take the word of one who knows better than yourself what belongs to the quality, and she tells ye, that Miss Marian will be as happy as the day is long — and why not? Won't she ha' got a rich husband; won't she ha' saved Castle Raymond from being sould; and sure, you know that if iver that came to pass, it would be the ould gentleman's death; won't she —"

"Don't bother us, axing yer pardon, nurse; have n't I got the sight o' my eyes, and the feelings o' my heart — and do n't I see how it is?"

Nelly Riley was right; the torch of Marian Raymond's heart was quenched. Sir Charles Barnett had been a leader of fashion, when fashion and vice were even more synonymous than in our own days. He had drank and gamed in royal company. He was still brilliant, and most elegant in his manners, but he was no longer supreme in matters of taste and ton; younger men were preferred by the new beauties, and Sir Charles sought retirement on his Irish estates, to recruit both health and purse. An old uncle died suddenly, and left him the reversion of immense wealth. He longed again to dazzle and to lead; but he felt and knew that, except as a dinner-giver, his reign was over:—a man may give dinners at any age; but it is not at any age that he can waltz, sing, and flirt with ladies who had succeeded their mammas in the empires of fashion. He had ever eschewed matrimony, for reasons which it is unnecessary to explain; but the radiant and dazzling beauty of Marian Raymond attracted his attention. He perceived, with the quickness of a man of the world, that she would immediately create a sensation; her *naïveté*, her wit, could have no rivals—her beauty few. When first he saw her, she had scarcely numbered fifteen summers, and then he introduced himself to Mr. Raymond by offering to purchase the castle and grounds. This was received as an insult by the proud, though needy proprietor, and it required all Sir Charles Barnett's tact to gain the good graces of the master of Raymond. He succeeded, as we have seen, effectually; for Mr. Raymond had only told his daughter the truth, when he affirmed, that her accepting Sir Charles's hand was the only way to save him from a jail. Poor girl! she saw that indeed her father's hour was come, as well as her own, and she agreed, only stipulating that she was not to be called upon to fulfil her contract until the following summer. Sir Charles certainly acted with great liberality, paid off all encumbrances, and was recognised as the heir to Castle Raymond after the present possessor's death. A maddening fever was the result of this self-sacrifice, and Sir Charles might have repented, (for with her characteristic nobility of soul she told him all the truth,) had he not consoled himself with the idea, that as her lover was dead, it was of no consequence: every one, he believed, must have a first love before a second, and its memory would pass from her mind as clouds from the summer sky.

"I am come, father—Marian Raymond is come, to demand, for the *last time*, her father's blessing."

Her father was alone in his chamber, but a joyous bridal party crowded the saloon.

"For the *last time*, my girl!—What do you mean?"

"After this morning there will be no Marian Raymond."

"Ah! my dear, I wish you had been a boy—and yet I do not—but, though not Marian Raymond, you are my daughter still. Ah! well may he be proud of you——"

"I am dressed, you see, father, for the sacrifice."

"Sacrifice, do you call it?" he replied—"say rather, for the festival."

"Be it so,—there is some country, I think—though I cannot tell where, which *he* used to speak of, where they made the sacrifice a festival. But you will be happy, father—you will enjoy, long, long enjoy dear Castle Raymond."

"So I will—that rascally wine-merchant, Marian, has been writing to me, to get back my custom; but not a drop of his claret shall ever enter my cellars—no, no; when you come again, you will hardly know the old place."

"Father, grant me one request—the fishing-tackle, and Harry's old

fowling-piece—he hung them on the walls himself, where they now are—*do not let them be removed.*”

Mr. Raymond pressed his daughter's hand in silence.

“When I return here, father, I hope I shall find you happy:—what I do is for you only.”

“Happy! how can I be otherwise, my Marian? I never felt better in my life—never in better health or spirits.”

He led her into the saloon; and soon after a gay cavalcade passed through the motley crowd to the village church—they entered its ivy-garnished portal—the ceremony commenced—proceeded—concluded. It was observed afterwards by many, that when the clergyman demanded—“Who gives this woman to be the wife of this man?” Mr. Raymond's voice faltered, and his countenance, latterly much bloated, assumed a purple and inflamed appearance. When all was over, he moved as if to salute his daughter; but, instead of the warm kiss of parental affection on her cheek, she received the dying body of her father in her arms. A strong apoplectic fit had rendered the master of Raymond a corpse within twenty minutes after he entered the church of Cloyne. How truly were the words of Scripture fulfilled! “In the midst of life we are in death.”

And poor Marian—what would she not have given that the blow, if it was to be, had fallen a few minutes sooner. “Then, then, I might have been preserved from this hateful union—what cared I for those estates—I might have lived and toiled at liberty, not driven, alas, to live with him whom I loathe!”

It is but justice to Sir Charles Barnett to confess, that, after this unfortunate occurrence, he did every thing he could to gratify the feelings of his bride. Though strongly disliking the Irish wakes and funerals, yet he permitted them to proceed according to ancient custom, and took the lead in the procession as chief mourner. His conduct, towards Marian, on this occasion, commanded her esteem, if not her love; and deeply grateful was she for it. Youth is apt to attribute *all* vices where it discovers *one*, and to believe that those they dislike must inherit all the faults and imperfections they can possibly imagine. So it was with Marian; yet she endeavoured, with a resolution, not one of her least TRIALS, to make herself believe she had done her husband injustice.

“I will now,” she said, “labour to discharge my duty.”

When all was over, and they prepared to leave the country for the London season, Lady Barnett, on descending one morning from her dressing-room, found Sir Charles occupied in giving directions to various workmen as to the necessary repairs of the castle during their absence—the old armour and fishing-tackle had been torn rudely from the walls, and lay in heaps upon the marble pavement.

“Let these rubbishing things be given away, and the pictures and statues I shall send from London occupy their places.” One old gun, surmounted by a cap and fishing-rod, still remained untouched near the back entrance to the hall. “Shall I take these down too, your honour?” inquired one of the men.

“No, no,” replied Marian, who was leaning against the oaken ballustrades of the staircase—“No, no, Sir Charles does not wish those removed.”

“Not removed, my dear! you cannot, surely, mean these things to remain stuck over the door! they would destroy the harmony of my entire arrangement. The hall is really fine; those columns and carvings in admirable keeping; and, when my plans are completed, it will be as im-

posing as anything in England — you are not serious, Marian? — Peters, Lady Barnett has changed her opinion — remove those things."

At this instant the remembrance of her noble cousin, as he had placed his implements of sport in their rest, while she, with tearful eyes, stood at one side, and poor Busca, little dreaming that his dear master was about to depart, at the other, came full upon her — she could not bear them to be removed — she could not support the idea of their being profaned by any touch; before Peters could execute his master's orders, she called — "Forbear!" in a tone, it might be of emotion, it might be of authority — it was, most likely, a mingling of both. "Sir Charles," she added, going into the breakfast-room, "Sir Charles, I would speak with you." He followed her into the apartment, and closed the door.

"It is a weakness, and one for which, perhaps, I should beg you to forgive me; but I have never, since the commencement of our acquaintance, used the slightest concealment towards you." Sir Charles bowed. "That cap, gun, and fishing-rod, were hung there by my cousin the night before he left us — for ever; — will you oblige me by not having them removed?"

There was a pause. How much of our destiny hangs upon a few words! Words — how brief, how mysterious, yet how powerful their influence! The instruments of our will, the directors of worlds, the arbiters of fate — and its controllers! — brief words! — that stamp an impress on the memory which time cannot efface. Oh, if words were but more accurately weighed, how much misery might be spared, how much evil prevented!

Marian waited for his reply — on it depended more than the narrow-minded baronet imagined — she waited long, so long, that it became necessary for one to speak.

"On the morning of my marriage, the last request I made my poor father was, that they should remain untouched."

"You must," replied Sir Charles, but too evidently mortified, "attach much value to the person who placed them there, to object so strongly to their removal."

"I did attach much value, and I regard his memory — he was my cousin."

Sir Charles forgot (what I have observed many very elegant public characters forget, *at home*) his good breeding; and, with a perfectly well-bred sneer, interrupted her at the word — *cousin*.

"You need not attempt to conceal the fact from *me*, Lady Barnett; he was more dear to you than any cousin."

"Sir Charles," she replied, "I never did, nor ever will, conceal anything from you. You are my husband; and, whether he deserves it or not, a husband has a right to his wife's unqualified confidence: concealment I believe to be the root of all domestic misery. What my sentiments towards Henry O'Donnell were, you have heard, and from me, before; you cannot entertain any unpleasant feeling towards the clay — the mouldering clay — of my childhood's friend. I promised him that those implements of the chase should never be removed except by his own hand; do then, I entreat of you, let them remain as long as I live — they are in the shadow — do not, pray do not, remove them, for —"

"For my sake," she wished to have added, but she could not; she was unable to frame an appeal, bordering on affection, to one for whom she felt it not.

"I am very sorry, Marian," he replied coldly, "but I regret to say, that, trifling as it may seem, having given the order, I cannot see how I can retract; the things will be better out of sight. I had no idea that you entertained such a strong *penchant* for the gentleman; indeed, cherishing such a feeling, you ought to have paused before you honoured me with your hand."

Marian's only reply was a bitter groan ; and, without another word, she left the apartment, crossed the hall, and proceeded with unmingled bitterness of spirit to the dressing-room she had recently quitted. She threw herself on her knees, and, burying her face in her hands, gave way to a burst of regret, such as she seldom indulged in — for tears are an indulgence, and a blessed one, to the stricken at heart. Mingled with her tears were prayers — prayers to the Almighty, who is known to us in the hour of trouble, whether of mind or of body, as the One holy and true Spirit, who can either remove from us our afflictions, or teach us how to bear them as Christians only can.

Marian had known little, during her early years, of religion, except its name ; but sorrow and solitude had taught her where she might find consolation ; and enthusiasm, so strong a feature in her character, having latterly no worldly object to chain it to the earth, worked its way towards heaven.

"Teach me, O Lord !" she ejaculated, "to bear the reproach which I have in a measure merited ; teach me to perform the hard and heavy duty of wife to him whom I love not, though thou knowest full well there is no other on earth whom I do love."

She was interrupted by a whining noise, which she well recognised — it was poor Busca ! Her four-footed friend was readily admitted ; and she pondered in her mind whether she ought to caress even his dog, when he whom at the altar she had engaged to love, honour, and obey, would, she doubted not, disapprove of her so doing. The poor animal stretched upon the rug as usual, and contented himself by elevating an ear occasionally, as his beautiful mistress paced up and down the chamber. It was evident that Sir Charles Barnett's mind, however dressed and fashioned by circumstances, was intrinsically poor and mean. Had he thought kindly, or even wisely, he would have seen at once, that though Marian was perhaps wrong, as a married woman, in cherishing the remembrance of one, all too dear in former times, yet the noble frankness she had shown, the freedom from all art upon the subject, the confidence she reposed in him so bravely, deserved a similar return ; and had he been capable of valuing her as she merited, he would have been proud to preserve what she had frankly confessed she valued. Were even the wisdom of generosity sufficiently estimated, the world would go on in better tune : people, for the most part, endeavour to bring events within their own narrow conceptions, instead of striving to expand in proportion to the greatness of events.

"I ax yer pardon, Miss — my Lady, I mane — dear, dear, it's so hard to turn one's tongue to a word one's not used to ; but you have the heart's respect, any way," said the old gardener at Castle Raymond, the morning before Marian was to leave her childhood's home — "and may I make bold to ax, if you intend taking Busca with you over seas ?"

"Yes, Frank."

"Lave him with me, Miss, my Lady, and I'll take care of the baste ; he has no taste for travelling now ; and sure Nelly Riley's son, Bat, writes a fine hand, and I'll indite a letter with the priest, (no disrespect to his reverence ;) and, if you did n't think I'd be makin' too free, sure I'd direct a line to tell you how Busca was, and how the rosies got on, and all about the melon-bed ; and the new graft on the apple-trees."

"I shall be happy to hear from you, thank you, Frank ; but I cannot part with Busca, he was my father's favourite, and, — in short, I must take Busca."

"Busca," persisted the gardener, "is fond o' me, and he and the gray cat are the best friends in the world now ; they lie together on my ould

jock, that sarves 'em for a mat; indeed, lady dear, I wish you would lave me Busca."

"I am grieved I cannot oblige you in this, Frank: is there any thing else I can do? can I send you any thing from England?"

"God bless you, my Lady, I should like a quarter of English tobaccy; I've a great curoosity to see what sort o' stuff it really is; and I bear their kail, particularly their brocoli, bates Bannaher. But, Ma'am, my Lady darlint, for the love o' the poor ould masther, and for the love—no, not that, because, in coorse, it's past, but, for the regard of Masther Harry, lave Busca to me—see how the craythur rams his could nose into my hand, as if he said, I'll stay wid you."

"It's very strange you should have set your mind on this!"

"May be so, my Lady, strange things happen every day. Sure, it's mighty strange what makes sich a beautiful, great, big sunflower, as that yon, come out of a little blay, humpy seed, not as big, no, nor half, nor quarter as big as a praytee's eye! Well, plaze yer Ladyship, all I can say is, that if you do n't lave Busca behind, he'll never see the ould gray cat again, that's all?"

"Frank! I insist upon knowing what you mean."

"Ah, Busca, a cushla!" continued the gardener, with true Irish tact—"ah, thin, Busca, would yer mistress not let on, I'd incense her into it, you poor brute, how yer no favourite with Mither Bijaw, my Lord's vally de sham, and how he said to me—'Ould Blossom,' says he, 'if my lady intends bringing that ould stinking baste (axing yer pardon, Busca; but 't was he said it, not me) with us, (by us, mancing Sir Charles and himself, the rude ill-raired pup,)—with us,' says he, 'we'll give him a dose,' says he, 'crossing the channel,' says he, 'and then make *our* (the impudent black-guard!) *our* lady believe he died of the say sickness.' So with that, says I, what would his honour say to that? says I—'O, nothing at all,' says he, 'for Sir Charles hates the sight o' him, and whenever my lady's back is turned gives him a poke or a puck with his foot—I have good reason to know that he'd never say a word, except "O be joyful," if he was fairly gone.' So I says nothing; for the might's the right evermore with thim English agin us. Now, Ma'am, my Lady, a' vourneen, you'll let Busca stay with his ould friend Frank."

Marian made no reply; her heart was too full to speak. She turned from the gardener to conceal her emotion, and at a break in the plantations encountered her husband.

"I have been giving some final directions as to the trees we wished put down this autumn," he observed, as they met—"Have you been directing your old gardener as to your flowers?—by the way, he gets old, that Master Frank—I must send off some of my Scotch people from Barnett Park to get every thing in right order."

"Not to turn away Frank, Sir Charles?"

"Certainly not, my dear, if you wish to the contrary—always most happy to meet your views, where they are consistent with *propriety*."

Poor Marian made no observation on this sarcastic reply, but fancied that Sir Charles cast an unkind look on the hound, who, certainly, often provoked the baronet; for, in former times Busca always received his advances with a certain exposure of the teeth and gums, not very flattering to one desirous of cultivating his acquaintance. Few words passed between them, until, on reaching the vestibule, Sir Charles closed the door, so as to prevent the hound from entering.

"In England, Marian, dogs are not advanced to the rank of companions, particularly when they grow offensive by age."

It was on Marian's lip to inquire if all things grew disagreeable as they

grew old ; but she remembered that "grievous words stir up anger," and held her peace. Sir Charles continued,

"I do not think that Busca will ever bear a sea voyage ——"

"I think not," was her forced reply to him, whom, under the influence of her strongly excited feelings, she regarded as little better than a premeditated murderer. That he should meditate the destruction of an animal he knew she so fondly loved, was cruel ; but to take his valet, a low-bred, insulting foreigner into his confidence, and plan with him the death of that poor blind favourite, was mean, low, pitiful. How, in defiance of all her resolutions to the contrary, did she despise this man of worldly wealth and narrow soul ! With this feeling came another — *he was her husband !*

Despite all that has been said to the contrary, there is something singularly brilliant and invigorating in "The Season in London." The weather, from April to June, is, generally speaking, on its best behaviour ; the animation spreading itself, either as a bane or a blessing, over all classes of society during the sitting of Parliament, is in full force : it gives gentlemen something to talk about in the park, in the streets, at the clubs ; and excites (if anything can excite an Englishman) something bordering on interesting conversation, during the ten or twenty minutes' pause before dinner, at which time the said gentlemen "bunch" together in whatever portion of the room fronts the largest looking-glass, or lounge on the softest sofas, to the exclusion of the ladies, and are thus enabled to criticise, quite at their ease, the merits of the last new speaker. — Despite, then, the *mauvais ton* of almost every man of "*ton*" you meet, still there is much to charm and bewilder the senses in the London SEASON. The parks teem with beauty and elegance. The opera, the finest and most glorious of sensual enjoyments, is in full force. The exhibitions, such as they are, are open, and there is always more than two or three subjects at each to repay you for the loss of time consequent on looking at all. There is bustle in the streets, — not the ill-bred city bustle that forces you off the pavement, and covers you with mud ! — but the bustle consequent on the crowding of the better classes of society in search of amusement. The most noble horses parade the squares ; carriages, unrivalled in beauty of design and execution, meet each other at every corner. There is a rich and gorgeous blaze of all that is bright and curious in the magazines and shops ; the best books are reserved by the wary publishers for "the season ;" the most exquisite exotics flourish in the conservatories of the great and gay ; and the air of the favoured "West End" is redolent of the purest perfumes. Any foreigner, passing casually through London during "the season," would pronounce us the wealthiest and happiest of nations, and imagine that distress had never set its seal of want, and sin, and death, upon any of the children of Britain. Those who seek truth must dive amid the turbulent and disordered waters of sorrow, as well as ramble through the smiling groves and laughing pastures of joy !

It was Marian's third season in brilliant London, and many thought it was never truly brilliant until she appeared. Both in Ireland, and on her husband's estates in England, she had been, as far as she was permitted, an angel of charity ; she had founded schools, clothed the naked, fed the hungry ; and the deep-felt and grateful blessing followed the "pale lady" wherever she went. The first season passed off as her husband expected ; to use the cant phrase, she was splendidly successful. Though Barnett is

an ugly and common sounding name, there were "Barnett hats;" and the hair was "*Crêpé à la Barnette*;" and Lady Barnett's wit was often quoted, as the wit *par excellence*. Those who called her witty, knew not what wit was. Wit may be likened to a silver arrow, pure, glittering, and pointed; hers was of a more severe quality;—it was satire; not the flippant and ill-tempered smartness, descending to the person, not dealing with the vice,—but that finer and more ennobling quality, which feared not to tell Philip feasting that it would only commune with Philip fasting. Witty minds are seldom great, but a just quantity of satire sharpens the intellect unto perfection; it is the whetstone of many virtues, and is respected when its playful counterfeit is run down by temper and good sense. Sir Charles Barnett had taken a wife to help him to support his waning state; but he had not calculated on eclipse; he never considered it possible that a country girl should gain any admiration save for her beauty, and he by no means relished the universal homage rendered to her marvellous wisdom and sound judgment.

The president of the Royal Academy painted her portrait during her second season, and with his usual skill completed a picture that would have made Titian jealous. Lady Barnett looked at it for some time in silence; and then turning to the polished artist, she observed, "It is beautiful, but you know what it needs to make it like me."

"Lady," he replied with admirable tact, "it wants A SIGH UPON THE LIP."

And he was right.

"My dear Lady Barnett, I have a little request to make of you, this evening," said Sir Charles, "it is that you will not enter into any conversation with the Russian envoy about the plans *we*" (the mean creature had had nothing to do with them) "adopted for the education of the poor in Leicestershire; if he speaks again upon the subject, refer him to me. And I really wish you would not agree with Lord Somerton's notions about literature; he invariably contradicts me, and therefore, oblige me by not conversing with him."

"I do not agree with you, but will do as you desire."

"I think we shall confine our parties this season, to dinners, concerts, and card-assemblies. Balls" (Sir Charles had lately been afflicted with gout) "are really incorrect, since the introduction of waltzes."

"I am glad to find that your ideas of correctness are improving," replied his lady. Sir Charles winced at this.

Will it be believed that the very man who was lecturing and directing this high-souled woman on such trifling points, was continuing (almost openly) in the practice of what the uninitiated would call "gross immorality," but what the well-bred delicately classify as a *liaison*? Oh, this twisting and mooting of terms! this cloaking of all that is abominable under the banner of "human frailty!" this glossing and polishing of vice! this burning of incense in high places, and bending of the knee to the Baal! How does the free-born soul sicken at, and loathe, such homage! God forbid that I should for a moment wish to see the levelling of rank, or the decent barriers of society overthrown. I honour the one, and respect the other; but vice is vice, though a coronet bind the brow; and virtue is as holy in a peasant's cottage as in a ducal palace. How many are worshipped, literally, during the season in London, because of their fetes, and splendour, who would not be tolerated in what is termed decent society, were it not for "station." Lady Barnett felt this deeply; and while she was idolized, loathed the idolatry. Not that she was insensible to praise or applause;—what woman is, what woman ought to be? but she longed for a devotion, which she knew, as a wife, there was but one who could render. She wished to be the object of a warm and fervid affection, as she

had once been. She was constantly the victim of her penetration, and sometimes wished that God had, in his mercy, bestowed upon her less feeling and more folly. There was one thing, and one only, that yielded her pleasure: she had an extended sphere of doing good; and the manner in which she threw her entire soul into relieving the necessities of others, often excited in her worldly-minded husband an astonishment he did not deem it necessary to conceal.

"I cannot think, Marian, why you are so anxious about the dead curate of Lyme's daughters: one is deaf, and the other blind; moreover, nobody knows them."

"Simply, Sir Charles, because their father is dead, one deaf, the other blind, and nobody knows them."

Sir Charles muttered something about "bad habits, contracted through a defective education, and wild Irish views of manners and society;" and the once free-hearted Marian listened, as she had often listened, patiently; "for patience is the badge of all her tribe."

Would those who crowded her splendid saloons, and were astonished at her taste and calm majestic beauty, — would they have believed that the canker was busy at a heart, where sorrow had made its sepulchre?

"Lady Barnett," inquired one of her visitors, casually taking up a morning paper from amid the heap of periodical literature with which it is customary to heap a library table, "do you ever read our political journals?"

"Hardly ever."

"We continue gaining victory on victory; indeed, Napoleon must soon evacuate Spain and Portugal."

Marian could never hear any allusion to the Peninsular campaign without emotion; her heart beat violently as the gentleman continued —

"So, I see an exchange of prisoners has lately been effected; some Irish names, too, among the number. You must surely be interested in them, Lady Barnett? Calvert O'Connell, lieutenant in the 3d dragoons; Barry St. Leger — ay, all the St. Legers were brave fellows; Henry O'Donnell, captain in the royal Irish —"

Marian seized the journal from the grasp of the astonished loungeur, and in another moment — the paper clasped within her hands, her eyes starting from their sockets — she had fallen back on the sofa, not in a fainting fit, but in strong and terrific convulsions.

"And so, Marian — you are a wedded wife! and though now, three seasons, the star of the ascendant, I hear you are still triumphant. Long may you continue so — *if it makes you happy!* I have been more than three years a miserable prisoner, without one friend, who remembered Harry O'Donnell sufficiently to be interested in his exchange, which only chance has effected. I do not, lady, blame you; — you doubtless fancied I was dead; for you could not have been so altered, as not to have felt some anxiety for *your cousin's* liberty."

"I intend paying my respects, in the course of the morning, to you and Sir Charles; to whom I beg my respects. You will not be surprised at my strange hand-writing, when you hear that I lost an arm at Albuera!

"HENRY O'DONNELL."

It was more than a month since Lady Barnett had learned that Harry — her first — her only love — was in existence. When questioned by her husband as to the cause of her sudden illness, she told him all the truth. "If," she said, within her own bosom — "If Sir Charles suspects me — at all events I shall have the satisfaction of not deserving his suspicion."

"Was it joy or sorrow," inquired her tormentor — "that occasioned your ladyship's agitation?"

"Sir Charles," she replied, "do not trifle with feelings that have ever been laid bare before you. I do not deny your *right* to ask that question; and I reply frankly — that it was a mingling of both."

Her husband gazed steadily upon her; and her dark deep eye, — her broad high forehead, — and her fine pale features, — neither quailed nor shrank from the scrutiny; — even Sir Charles was moved.

"Marian," he said, "you are a noble woman, but not suited either for me or for the present times; — you should have remained among the stars until a holier sun shone upon England. I never met woman with truth like yours."

The involuntary tribute of such applause, paid by Vice to Virtue, is great indeed! Marian wept long and bitterly; — in the silence of her chamber, she prayed; — and they who know how hard it is to wish that those we love may not love in return, will appreciate her petition. She prayed that Harry would only remember her as his cousin. When she thought of the many changes she had seen men make, without an effort, she indulged in what may be termed the *painful hope*, that he might find it, perhaps had already found it, easy to look upon and love another. There was something in the tone of Captain O'Donnell's letter that repressed this conviction. I have heard many women assert, after receiving a declaration of love, that — "Indeed they had no idea of such a thing; they never thought the gentleman entertained the slightest affection for them:" — it might be true; but I never believed a word they said. Men are, doubtless, clever enough; but clever as they are, women, on this subject, are seldom — *never* at fault; — they have an intuitive knowledge of man's affection — they generally know it before he is aware of it himself; — and though man can easily *assume* an affection he does not feel, he must be a better adept in concealment than I can imagine possible, to hide a preference. The one phrase, — "if it makes you happy," — showed at once his anxiety, and his belief that she was miserable. The precious letter was more than half-way to her lips, yet she stayed its course, with a firmness those who have loved like her will estimate, and laid it on her desk. In a few moments she arose; and, with the letter in her hand, proceeded to Sir Charles's study.

"Lost an arm! Sad thing, sad thing," repeated Sir Charles, after he had finished its perusal. "Well, I shall be glad to see him. He is your relative; and we owe it to ourselves to treat our relatives with propriety."

"I think I must spend the day at Richmond, with Mrs. Brownlowe."

"No, no, Lady Barnett, it would be exceedingly wrong; you can receive your cousin here. I dare say we shall find him sadly changed."

Sir Charles, well skilled in human nature, was at fault: — the truth was, that, with the exception of his wife, his intimate female acquaintances had been of a very indifferent stamp; and he fancied that a worn-out mutilated soldier could possess no attractions for one so *fêted* and admired as his charming wife! Lady Barnett, well as she knew his littleness of mind, almost hoped that something like generosity had illumined his dark soul. She, too, was mistaken.

"He loves me still," she said, while tears of bitter agony coursed each other down her pallid cheeks, — his love has been unchanging as my own

— O, what am I, to own it! and he talked of my father, and of Castle Raymond, and the dead lark, and poor Busca! and my husband has been either mad or cruel enough to ask him to stay within these walls. What then? Am I fallen so low as to fear myself?" And the young and proud beauty paced her chamber with unequal steps.

Woman is never in so much danger as when she confides in her own strength. The meek-hearted and trembling find security in weakness, for they look for protection where it is always found, — they seek advice from the Most High, and implicitly employ His precepts as their laws: there is always safety for the humble Christian. According to the correct and established laws of English society, if a married female find not a friend in her husband, she is perfectly and completely cut off from every thing approaching to friendship with the more wise and superior sex. If, trusting to the pure and uncontaminated counsels of her own heart and motives, she seek advice or protection, in any way, directly or indirectly, from any man, no matter how exalted his character, or pure his motives, her reputation is tainted, irrevocably tainted, and therefore nothing worth, — she sinks in the moral scale, and can never retrieve what she has lost. I am willing to allow the hardship of this state; and yet, valuing as I do the reputation of my high-souled and beautiful countrywomen, more than their individual happiness, I can hardly wish it altered. To this very strictness, to this hardship in peculiar cases, we owe much of our domestic happiness, and all our good fame, — a fame that was never tainted, until an assumption of foreign manners (that sit as ill upon us as foreign fashions) rendered many, too many of those in high places, open to the scorn of the right-minded. "What," it may be asked, "is a woman to do who is married to a brute or a fool? — Is she to have no friend, no companion?" I answer, None; she either made her election, or it was forced upon her; but, in either case, she owes it to her God, to her sex, and to her country, to bear her cross, and prove that she rises superior to the ills that are heaped on her devoted head. No matter how pure may be her motives, the world reads actions, and not hearts.

Lady Barnett believed that her cousin was as high-souled as herself; she remembered how strict his notions had been, and how often he had chid and reproved the volatility of disposition, that had, at one period of her existence, rendered her so gay and thoughtless. She had read deeply too the records of human life, yet it never occurred to her to bring her observations to bear upon her cousin: — "He taught me ever what was best and wisest, and to whom can I look with greater safety for advice if I should need it?" With this feeling she scrupled not to consult her cousin upon many points unconnected with her husband, or the domestic differences, that, despite of her care and real attention to prevent, sprang up between them. Her innate propriety, more than her judgment, counselled her not to suffer any interference upon such points; and, on all other matters, her vanity was gratified to find that her monitor agreed with her in all things.

It must also be confessed, that though at first she had shrunk from meeting her cousin, yet, after that meeting was over, she experienced a tranquillity, a security in his presence, to which she had long been a stranger. She had never enjoyed the sweet privilege of appealing, with all her feelings, to her husband. Though she had never used concealment, she could not be said to have reposed confidence, — that full, perfect, and happy confidence, which is the outpouring of an affectionate heart, and forms a true earthly paradise. Her vivid imagination, that had so long communed with heaven, had again found an earthly object upon whom to lean, — and "Cousin Harry," as before, was even more the mind's idol than he had been at Castle Raymond. There he had been her leading star: — the idea,

the possibility of his being *changed*, had never once occurred to Marian ; she looked to him to strengthen her good resolves, *not* to overturn them.

Of all things likely to suffer change, nothing changes like man ! With women the case is different ; events with them are things of rare occurrence, and there is little chance of one rubbing out the record of another. The impression has time, not only to be made, but, consequently, is not easily effaced. Men fall rapidly into various societies, and hear various opinions ; this occasions them to be less firm, or, to use a harsher term, less obstinate. It may be for good ; — it may be for evil. We shall see.

Captain O'Donnell was almost domesticated in Sir Charles Barnett's house, and people did begin to say, that "they wondered," — "were surprised," — "astonished," — "suspected," — "hoped not," — "Lady Barnett, so beautiful." — "What could she see in him ?" — "Husband careless," — "used her harshly ;" — and, at last, some of these whispers absolutely reached the ear of Sir Charles. With a violence totally uncalled for, he assailed and reproached his wife. She replied with her usual truth and dignity, — for one criminal idea, — one feeling that angels could pronounce impure, — had never stained her soul. Yet she had stood on the brink of a precipice, and blessed, a thousand times blessed was the power that told her of her danger !

"I will tell Harry that he must depart," she said ; "and his sense of propriety will point out to him the necessity for doing so."

It was more easily said than done. The time came, and brought its trial. With the instinctive propriety and delicacy of a virtuous woman, she avoided the reason why, and told him only of the fact. Little was she prepared for his comment ; — little did she dream of his moving from the high and honourable pedestal, on which her imagination, more than his own merits, had placed him. The idea of Henry O'Donnell having become "a man of the world," as the phrase goes ; — of those bland and fascinating manners being only the polished surface ; — and the certainty that continental example and habit had sullied that true and noble spirit which she imagined was more than proof against contamination, fell slowly, but heavily, upon her feeling heart.

"I see how it is," he said ; "Sir Charles is jealous. I thought the world would whisper."

"You thought the world would whisper !" repeated Lady Barnett. "You thought it, and yet you remained near me !"

"Marian," he replied mournfully ; "you have not now to learn, how dearer far than life you are to me ; the only living creature of my kin ; the only being who binds me to existence. You are not happy, and yet you would separate those whose lives depend upon being near each other. All I have asked is your society, and that you would not surely refuse your cousin !"

Marian could not repeat all that Sir Charles had said ; she could only entreat, command O'Donnell's departure ; and to her honour be it recorded, she did so firmly — she neither quailed nor wavered in her mandate, — yet could she not utter the reproaches that grew upon her lip, at his acknowledging that he expected the world would notice and misconstrue his attentions ; while anticipating this result, he had yet remained.

It was now vain for him to seek her pity, by a representation of his utter loneliness, and by drawing a true but melancholy portrait of what her situation would be when deprived of her only friend. Her resolution was taken ; she saw and parted from her cousin. Letter after letter were delivered to her, but she returned them unopened. "I might read all he could say," she would repeat to herself, "but I will not. I might read without danger, for he is not now what he once was." This was true ; but when she im-

aged, in her hours of indignation, that he had become a being of no importance in her eyes, she erred in judgment.

The season drew towards its termination, Sir Charles become worse, and was more morose than ever. He had been a good deal disappointed lately; — had not produced as good an effect in the house as he had anticipated; and, somehow or other, Lady Barnett was not as attractive as usual. Hints were followed by direct charges, and the usual recriminations succeeded. It was in vain that Marian recalled to his remembrance her ingenuous disclosures, her aversion to meet her cousin, and the promptness with which, on Sir Charles's first intimation, she sacrificed all her feelings to his wishes. He saw that she was heart-broken, and, with the characteristic of a perfect tyrant, he persisted in his torture; coolly communicating, as the termination of his discourse, that she should immediately accompany him to Castle Raymond; "the most out-of-the-way place," as he observed, "and of course the best to hide his disgrace." How her proud heart beat within her bosom! And when, long after midnight, she reasoned herself into the submission which, as a wife, she felt was her first duty, she knelt, and pressed her throbbing brow within her small white palms, and prayed fervently to the Almighty to strengthen her in all good things. She thanked Him too, in that He had mercifully taught her, ere it was too late, the painful, the agonising truth, that he on whom she had bestowed a love, far nearer to devotion than to any earthly passion, was all too tainted to dwell in her remembrance, save as a vision of the past; which, like the lark of her young days, had soared towards heaven, yet found its death on earth.

"Troth, Nurse Grady, and it must be yerself that's glad to get the young misthress back," said our former acquaintance, Nelly Riley, to the nurse of Castle Raymond; "and she's looking very poorly; and not, by no manner o' means, as handsome, to my thinking, as before she wint away."

"She can't be blind to poor Sir Charles's fate," replied the sapient nurse; — "he's had the gout in his stomach twinty times; and it'll choak him some of these days; — and thin we'll have a new masther, I'm thinking."

"Is't the captain ye mean? Arrah! be asey, now; — I wish her better luck. The captain, my lannan, 's more changed nor any of 'em; — Sir Charles is the ould thing, that, as I've often said, would make broth of his father's bones. My Lady's heart, God bless it! is the same as ever, — a beautiful heart she has! It's useless trying to turn May butter into flint stone; — but the captain has got foreign hurling in his head — and do n't tell me — if he had true regard for his cousin, he would n't visit the gamekeeper's daughter so often —"

"My Lady," replied the nurse, bridling, "knows nothing of his even being in the country; — How should she? And as to the gamekeeper's daughter — Did Master Harry tell you it was the daughter he visited? — might n't he have a regard for the father, Mrs. Riley?"

"Mrs. Grady, Ma'am," replied the shrewd Irishwoman; "you have a mighty great regard for fine French silk handkerchiefs, and a fine decket o' corral bades. I tould you my mind afore; and I'll tell it you again, if you like, and make a clane breast at once't; — but, maybe, better not; — time tells all things."

In a few weeks, the death of Sir Charles Barnett was duly announced in all the fashionable journals; — and though, from what we know, Lady

Barnett could not be called inconsolable, yet she behaved as was right and fitting her to do ; — nay, she did more, — she watched her husband to the last ; — she tried to turn his thoughts towards that source from whence she had derived consolation ; and she both prayed and wept when all was indeed over. Among all her trials she had one consolation ; — he blessed her with his dying breath, and requested her forgiveness.

Her year of mourning was expired ; — perhaps the most tranquil year of her existence. Still young, with renovated beauty, and a large fortune, Lady Barnett was talked of, and toasted, far more than when her young heart beat, and her gleesome laugh sounded amid the groves and hills of Castle Raymond.

Much was she tempted to revisit London ; — she had become a mark for all speculating fortune-hunters, whether male or female ; and, if her intimacy with her cousin had ever cast a cloud over her fame, it had passed as shadows from a brilliant landscape.

But though others ceased to remember, she had not forgotten. I have said that Henry O'Donnell was a man of the world, and as such, it will be readily believed, he did not relinquish the idea that he might still be master of Castle Raymond and its fair mistress. He had wisely withdrawn from the country on Sir Charles's death, well knowing that Marian's delicacy would shrink from his intruding at such a time ; and when he did return, he managed to be introduced so as to avoid alarming her prejudices or creating any unpleasant sensations.

It must not be imagined that O'Donnell was what would be considered either a bad or a heartless man ; when he reasoned, he was invariably right ; when under the influence of his passions, fearfully wrong ; his mind had become imbued with a false philosophy, and it was convenient to be the disciple of a school that granted much license. He loved Marian ; but he loved her as a woman, without caring for or comprehending her true nobleness of soul. He had seen much of life, and the life of a soldier-prisoner had little in it to strengthen what might have been good. After he left London he visited the scenes of his childhood, and the turf-raised mound to the memory of the dead lark ; and the attention paid by the old gardener to Busca, by his lady's express command, confirmed Henry in the belief that she was unchanged. She was a living instance of the romance of life lingering and dwelling with advancing years. O'Donnell admired virtue and glory in the abstract, without possessing either the firmness which is the groundwork of the one, or the enterprise necessary for the other. There is an undying essence in woman's love, which, like the costly perfume, endures after the vase that contained it is broken, and clings even to the hand of its destroyer. How Marian had loved is already shown ; it now remains only to prove, what life proves daily — though books, often at variance with human nature, are too fond of setting forth love in the conclusion requited, and an end of triumph crowning a life of pain — that perfect happiness is as much a fable as unbroken sunshine, and would be as wearisome, and as destructive. He who knows and orders best has willed it otherwise, and has suffered that the wickedness of some should draw forth the virtues of others, and those who trust in him in heart and spirit will feel that all is good.

It was a clear, calm evening, and the mistress of Castle Raymond was alone in her own halls. She had discarded the robes of mourning, and reclined in jewelled state in a room redolent of perfume.

Her thoughts were of a second marriage, and one that she had not determined on without some fears and some misgivings ; but woman's unassisted

wisdom is little worth, when set against the strength of an affection which had grown with her growth, and outlived both time and sorrow. Her eye rested on the wedding-ring, which still encircled her taper finger—it appeared to her an unhallowed badge—she slowly removed it, and, with a trembling hand, and a blushing cheek, tried on another, which she took from a small red case. The sound of a distant footstep smote upon her ear, and, blushing still more deeply, she replaced the mystic bauble in its rest, and the other emblem of her wedded state upon her finger.—As the evening deepened, and she continued still alone, she thought upon her cousin's faults; and what had appeared so criminal when it would have been sinful to have loved, had dwindled into a marvellously short catalogue of faults—failings rather—which she could hardly tell over: her imagination wandered to the scenes of her early and of her present happiness—and she scouted from her memory the remembrance of her married life, as one would cast forth a loathsome object from what was otherwise cheerful and smiling. Harry's natural generosity of disposition had prompted him to enter into all her plans for the good of her tenantry. The village of Castle Cloyne was now clean and cheerful; its inhabitants felt themselves raised in the scale of society—and that is the true way of ensuring an Irishman's gratitude; the hills within sight of Castle Raymond were covered with cattle, the property of zealous and industrious farmers, who, if they did not manage quite as well as their English neighbours, yet promised to be all, within a little time, that their best friends could desire.

Marian revolved and re-revolved all her plans and projects for future happiness; and if a doubt did arise, as to what her former fashionable friends might say, rather than analyse her feelings, she contented herself with the consideration, that she should not mix with them again—that she should be far away from their sneers and their comments—that she should be happy in her own dear country—happy amid the unsophisticated peasantry, who looked to her for all their comforts—happy with the chosen of her heart! in her youth's first and only affection. Generous, and free-hearted in action as well as thought, Marian settled upon O'Donnell all the Raymond property. "He must be perfectly independent of me," argued the noble creature, "to render his happiness equal to my own." Her lover was all gratitude and thankfulness, and remonstrated much against that of which he secretly approved: but I must not do him injustice; his cousin's generosity touched his heart more than her other virtues—he could comprehend the one, but not the other.

They were married.

Those who truly and devotedly love, will understand me when I say, that Marian was as happy as woman could be for some months after her marriage—I had almost written that she was tumultuously happy;—but it pleased God that her health grew feeble in a little time, and though she did not suffer pain, she could not wander about with her beloved, as in former days. She hardly felt the privation while he was with her; but, though invariably kind, and even affectionate, Marian had discovered what, had she not loved too well, she might have known before—that upon the most important of all subjects they greatly disagreed. She had learned to trace the wisdom and the bounty of the *Almighty* in his works—she could read "good in every thing;" she saw his glory in the firmament, his wonders in the flood; she had grown practically pious from a deep sense and knowledge that in the belief and hope, springing only from true religion, was there refuge for the broken-hearted, or an unerring guide through the mazes of the world: her religion had been the result of experience—she had seen its good, and felt its advantage—and while she longed for the time when her husband would join with her in prayer and praise, she yet

dreaded lest her efforts to make him what she wished might fail, and drive him farther from the belief in which she trusted.

Another year had passed; and again the mistress of Castle Raymond was seated alone in the same apartment in which we once saw her try on the token of her new contract. Colonel O'Donnell (for money achieves rank) had been absent on business, and his wife, more impatiently than usual, awaited his return. As she threw open the casement windows, shaded by a rich drapery of pink and silver, and stepped forth upon the marble terrace that overlooked the lawn — the beams of the harvest moon shed a flood of light and glory upon her head; yet her step was somewhat feeble, and she threw her arm round one of the pillars of the colonnade to support her in a spot where she could hear the approaching tread of his horse's hoofs, long before they entered the avenue of fragrant lime leading to the castle. Suddenly a female sprang upon the terrace, and stood beside the lady so silently, that Marian, unaccustomed as she was to fear, would have called to her servants, had not the stranger by an energetic movement, entreated her to forbear. She looked upon the pale attenuated figure, enveloped in a deep scarlet cloak; and as the hood, which had been drawn over the woman's face, fell back, Marian thought she recognised the features.

"You've forgotten me, lady, and no wonder," said the stranger; "I deserve that you should — and I only pray the blessed Virgin that I was n't myself — God break hard fortune before every honest man's child!"

"I remember you now, Mary Deane," said Marian, "but it is impossible for me to remember one I have been so long without seeing — can I do any thing for you, poor girl?"

The woman fell at her feet, and, while she kept her cloak closely clasped around her, sobbed forth a petition "that she would n't turn *again* her entirely, and use her worse than a dog."

She had, in truth, little reason to expect such treatment from the mistress of Castle Raymond, who, raising her from the earth, would have led her into the room she had so recently quitted, had not the girl refused to enter.

"Sure I've made an oath never to cross *his door*, and do n't ask me, lady, darlint, for I'm a poor unworthy sinner — God-stricken and dying, and willin' and happy to die, if I was fit, — though I am young, and the only child of my father — and yet, to my sorrow, I've heard the white-headed ould man pray that I'd never been born — and worse, lady — worse nor that — I saw him" (and here her words came short and broken) — "I saw him kneel down on his own hearth-stone, and curse me and mine, lady; me and mine! — Oh! why indeed was I born — why indeed was I born! — Yet I call the God who sees into my very heart this minute to witness for me, that, lady, darlint, I meant you no wrong; but he had the winning way with him, and if he could win you, no wonder he bewildered me."

"Of whom speak you, Mary Deane?" inquired Marian, in a voice of agonizing emotion, dreading she knew not what or whom — "Of whom speak you?"

"Of your husband, lady — of the father of — my child."

As she answered, her head sank upon her bosom, and throwing open the cloak that had hitherto shrouded her, discovered a sleeping boy upon her bosom.

"Tis all a falsehood — a fraud got up to — to — drive me mad!" exclaimed Marian, "a base lie — Woman, how dare you slander him?"

"Look at him," replied Mary Deane — holding the child forward to where the light from a glowing lamp was streaming on the glittering pavement.

Marian did look — long and anxiously look — she pushed the small round yellow curls from the boy's forehead; and as the movement fully roused him from the deep sleep of infancy, he smiled in her face, and clasped his little hands in admiration of some of the rich jewels that glittered on her dress. The smile confirmed the tale, and taught the lady of that noble house that her most bitter trial was indeed arrived. Sir Charles's gallantries she had borne with fortitude; they had grievously wounded her deep sense of religion and morality — they had, moreover, wounded her woman's pride, but they had never seared her heart — they had never entered, and lacerated, and destroyed!

"Tell — tell me one thing," she demanded of the betrayed girl, who still cowered at her feet, "this child was born before our marriage; have you been sinless since?"

A deep and bitter groan was the only answer she received.

It was enough.

Marian would have paced the terrace, but she felt as if rooted to the spot whereon she stood. She was iron-bound — spell-bound to the very earth. The child, still in admiration of the brilliant jewels, crept towards her. Her first feeling was to spurn — to thrust it from her; in the madness of the moment her foot was lifted to the act, — but she could not; it was **his** child!

The eye of the wretched mother had been fixed upon her infant's movements, and her sad heart beat more quickly when she saw that he was not repulsed.

"What would you with me?" inquired Marian, when she could find utterance. "Speak, and quickly."

"Lady, I am dying, — dying of the same decline that took my mother away soon after I was born. See here." She held forth her arms, white and fleshless; they quivered in the moonbeams. "I am gone, entirely," continued the unfortunate, "and so I ought to be; for the beauty he talked about went, and his love went with it, and I've been almost starvin' in a strange parish; and my father's curse, and your goodness, and all together, hanging over me like a ban; and I could n't die easy till I asked yer pardon, and asked —" The mother's eye, which, still bright, gleamed like a lamp within a sepulchre, rested on her child. The glorious creature to whom she spoke, understood the appeal, and, immolating all common feeling, she stooped, and kissed the forehead of the unoffending infant; her silent offering ascended to the throne of the Almighty, a record of a virtuous woman's triumph. Mary Deane knelt, as if to pray, but she could not speak; she could only weep — weep bitterly. At last she murmured —

"The stamp of the Lord was always on you; and you'll be good to the poor innocent babbly, and forget its miserable mother? And now, lady, darlint, if I had only my father's forgiveness — if I could only hear him take back the curse, I should die thankful; and, maybe, the Lord would forgive me."

James Deane was the gamekeeper to whom Nelly Riley had alluded; and little had poor Marian thought, when interrogating him as to where his daughter had gone, that he had so much cause for sorrow, and yet kept it within his bosom, lest it might poison his lady's happiness.

"I will see your father myself to-morrow, and entreat him for you."

"God in heaven bless you for that thought; but to-morrow, lady! to-morrow will be too late! I am dying now!"

"Follow me, then," replied Marian, "he must not refuse pardon when I ask it."

"And my child?" Mary Deane trembled violently, as she looked upon him for the last time.

"Leave him here. Have I not promised?" said Marian.

"You have, you have, lady. Och, lady dear! forgive me; I am a poor, miserable, wicked wretch, but och, hone! och! hone! *am I not a mother?* Sure an' I brought ye into the world, a lannan," she continued, apostrophising the child, whom she held closely to her bosom, "I brought you into the world, a perfect and beautiful boy; and I exulted over you; and when your little lip smiled on me, and your daushy fingers twisted in my hair, — God and the Virgin forgive me! but I felt as if I could bear all the sufferings that war ever suffered, and all the sin that ever was sinned, for yer sake; and I thought, that though *he* might change to *me*, he never could change to *you*, for warn't you his own, own child?"

"Come, come," said Marian, hoarsely — for every word the creature spoke was as a fresh dagger in her heart, — "the child is safe; are you not satisfied with my word?"

"Ay, ay, lady; God bless — bless you, lady, *but you are not his mother.* My heart's darlint! it is n't my eyes will watch you agin in the night; it is n't my ear will listen for yer breathin'; and, maybe — maybe, my own a coughla! you'll never know that poor Mary Deane was yer mother; and so best — so best; for when *he* turned, who knows but *you* may turn as well!" She imprinted a long, long kiss upon the child's lips, who, accustomed to her caresses, had fallen asleep.

"You will see him again," murmured Marian.

"Never! never! never!" she replied, wildly, "and now I have looked my last!" She suffered the long red cloak to drop from her shoulders, and rolling the child in it, laid him on the marble step that skirted the entrance; kneeling over him, she muttered a few short words, and then, slowly rising, she crossed her colourless arms upon her bosom, and said, "Now, God willin', I am ready."

Marian removed with her own hands the sleeping infant to a place of greater security, and, followed by Mary Deane, (whose fleshless form seemed moved and urged forward by supernatural strength,) she took her way to the gamekeeper's cottage. As they crossed the park, the tread of Colonel O'Donnell's horses came suddenly upon them: the two females stood behind a group of sapling oaks, as he and his servant passed; they both clung to the boughs of the young trees for support; but, as they rode onwards, Mary Deane stretched forward so as to catch a look of his departing shadow, while his wife, who not an hour before had so anxiously waited his return, remained erect on the spot, more like a statue of carved marble than a thing of life, for many minutes after the sound had ceased.

The old gamekeeper opened the door of his cottage himself to Marian's knock, and appeared almost terrified at seeing his mistress. His daughter had crouched behind her as she entered, and could not speak.

"I am come Deane," said his mistress, "to ask you to forgive your penitent girl. James Deane, I have forgiven her. I have taken her child into my house, and you must not refuse her, at such a time as this, her father's blessing."

The old white-headed man clasped his hands, and remained for some time silent; his wretched child crawled to his knees, and her long yellow hair entwined around his feet; she dared not look into her father's face.

"Deane, Deane, I entreat — I command you to forgive her!" reiterated the lady.

The old man looked as if he could scarcely comprehend her words.

"Father, father! oh, quickly, for I am dying!" Mary Deane at length exclaimed. He raised her to his bosom, and as he parted the long hair that shadowed her face, her head fell upon his shoulder, — her eyes wandered, — her lips, white and livid, separated from her teeth, — her fingers moved convulsively, — and he had just time to say, "God bless you, darling

Mary!" — when she again sank upon the earthen floor; — her spirit seemed indeed departed, and Marian, with a true feeling of humanity, knelt to support her head. The dying creature opened her eyes, and fixed their glare upon the lady's face, three or four times repeated, "Not cursed, not cursed — my boy — my child —" and expired.

That same night, Marian O'Donnell conducted her husband to a quiet chamber, not very distant from her own; and drawing the curtains of a small bed, showed him his sleeping child. She stood for a moment so as to cast the light of the candle upon his beautiful face, and then stooping down, she calmly kissed his forehead.

"The gamekeeper's daughter died, not three hours since, Henry, and I promised her to watch over your child. You have not known me, I think, as I deserved: may God forgive you for the poor heart you have broken, and the heart —" she turned proudly away, for tears were coming, and she would not let him see them fall.

What followed? No reproaches — no scenes — no storms. She knew and felt that she was still his wife, and that no matter how he performed his duty, she must not swerve from hers. Those who knew her best saw indeed that her eyes became sunk, her step languid, and noted that her voice, ever sweetly musical, had grown like the sighing of a wounded bird: but she never told her feelings; she buried them within her bosom; and, after a few years, they produced as their fruitage — death. The iron had entered her soul, and not all the efforts made by a husband, who at last became convinced of her inestimable worth, could withdraw it. Could she have loved him less, her sufferings might have been mitigated; but, though conscious of his faults, the affection of her childhood remained pure, spotless, and devoted to the last; and all that could be said was, what is said every day of many a devoted woman, "How grievous was the sacrifice!" Yet how great was her example! how glorious her triumph! Long before her death, she was blessed by the conviction that at last O'Donnell trusted as fully, as perfectly as herself, to his Redeemer's merits. The delightful certainty of meeting him, a holy and purified spirit, "where sorrow and sighing shall be no more," was a bliss she would not have exchanged for worlds; the pomps and pageantries of life were poor and worthless compared to her spiritual glory; and she left this, only to be perfected in another world. Her motto had been "Deeds, not Words." Her grateful feeling to the *Most High* was proved by acts of love, of forbearance, and of charity to her fellow-beings; and while the hearts of many will wonder at her forbearance, I feel inclined to assure those who are thus tried — and, alas! I grieve to know that many are so situated — that, hard as it may appear, they can only fulfil their duty to heaven and earth by — "Doing likewise."

THE OLD MAID.

THE TRIALS OF MILLICENT MORRISON.

"Poor old maidens."

OLD SONGS.

THE lady who accompanied the children whom I had so often admired, was a slight, thin, narrow-looking person, of what is termed "a certain age;" such certain age being of all others decidedly the most uncertain. When once an unmarried female passes thirty, until she is incontrovertibly old, wrinkled, and blind, she remains, in the estimation of all well-bred persons, "of a certain age;" and has to undergo the various taunts, sneers, and suspicions, which are unhesitatingly lavished upon the sisterhood:—"As particular as an old maid,"—"as fidgety as an old maid,"—"as cranky as an old maid,"—"disagreeable old maid," and "ugly old maid,"—are only a few of the epithets which are unsparingly lavished upon this much ill-used portion of the community. For my own part, I have had, ever since my earliest childhood, an affection for old maids, arising doubtless from the kindness invariably bestowed upon me by two, who were ancient when I was born, and, despite the wear and tear of life, remain of—"an uncertain age" at this present moment. Their capacious pockets were ever crammed with sweetmeats and story-books; and their beautiful sequestered cottage was the rendezvous of all the young persons who loved to do as they liked, and enjoy an undisturbed game of romps. God bless them! they increased my happiness even in my happiest days, and made me enter upon a resolution, which somehow or other I was tempted to forget, of being an old maid myself. But this is little to the purpose of my tale, which I do not profess to be an impartial one, for the reasons I have stated, having had all my life an affection for the dear, prinky, particular old souls, despite the faults, which an existence spent in "blessed singleness," is too apt to produce. It was at the quiet bathing-place called Bognor that I first saw my heroine; and I hope the bright eyes now fixed upon this page, will join me in my predilection by the time they are withdrawn from it—for, in all its leading features, it is a true portrait. If I fail in exciting the attention of my readers, it will be my fault, not Milly's.

I had often admired three beautiful children, who were attended by a good-looking woman of colour in their excursions along the strand,—a boy and two girls, healthy, and singularly handsome. Loving the society of young people, when they do not disturb the time allotted to reading or writing, I soon became acquainted with my favourites. To one at all involved in the necessary ceremonies of English society, there is something bright and reviving in the frank and unconstrained manners of an animated child: the brilliant smile, the joyous laugh, the gay voice, the bounding step, are like the freshening breezes of the ocean after suffering beneath a burning sky; they come, bearing the remembrance of our own early joys.

A playful child can always beguile sorrow of its bitterness. I endeavour not to think of what my young playmates may be—I am content with what they are. Those I met at Bognor were all I could desire; and many and many an hour we spent together on the sea-shore, watching for the treasures which the vasty deep threw up upon the beach; collecting seaweeds, and corallines, and shells—talking of shipwrecks and desolate islands—and, above all, repeating to them that exquisite poem of Mrs. Hemans on the Ocean:—

“The sea! the sea; the glorious sea,
What has the earth so fair,
Of hill, or valley, grove, or lea,
Which with it may compare?
Oh! I could sit for hours to look
Upon its wide expanse;
And read in its unwritten book,
Fresh charms in every glance.”

The only subject upon which we differed was motion. They used to tire me to death, and expect one, who is not only sedentary from habit, but of necessity, to run and race, and climb and tumble, as much as themselves. This was more than I could well endure; and about four days after the commencement of our friendship, (for children do not acknowledge, by either act or deed, the term acquaintance,) Horace, looking very gravely at me, said, “I wish Milly was come, for though she is not as great a romp, or as fond of fun as you, she could sit and talk to you when you are tired.” “She teaches me French and drawing,” said Julia. “And she knit me these pretty cuffs,” lisped Harriet. “And she makes my kites, and teaches me Latin,” chimed in Horace!

“Indeed,” I replied, “she must be very clever, and very good;—who is she?” “What, do n’t you know who Milly is? in Scotland she is called Milly of the Manse, because once she lived at the Manse.” Having given me this piece of satisfactory information, he bounded off to secure a star-fish, which the wave had deserted on the strand. I turned to Julia—“Is Milly your aunt?” “No.” “Your cousin?” “No.” “Your governess?” “No.” I hate such questioning of children; it teaches them both tattling and falsehood, and I inquired no more,—only little Harriet added, “She is our dear friend; not fine, like the grand ladies here, but the best, dearest body in the world, and I won’t have Nurse Maurice call her an old maid.” “Oh! Oh!” said I, “young as you are, you have learned to consider *that* term a badge of disgrace.” No wonder girls should so earnestly go a husband-hunting, with the dread of the pestilential cry ringing in their ears, when they would much rather hear the joy-bells of their parish church, or even the vulgar music of marrow-bones and cleavers. [By the way, I cannot avoid saying, that I agree with Grant Thorburn in considering an old bachelor really an obnoxious animal. Where he has the means of supporting a wife, he ought to have one; besides, the awful power of “popping the question” is in his own hands. And he may rely upon one thing, that be he ever so old, and ever so ugly, ever so openly devoted to celibacy, man-traps and spring-guns are in his path; and if he does not beware, like all who are very, very hard to please, he may take the crooked stick at last. So much by way of advice in parentheses.]

At last “Milly” came, and I confess I did not at first find her very prepossessing. Her figure, as I have said, was small and narrow, her shoulders round, or perhaps from constitutional delicacy she stooped rather forward; this, in a short, unmarried woman, I considered rather remarkable, as they generally make it a point to be as erect as possible. Her mouth had a

firm, set expression, by no means pleasing; her nose was small and well formed; and her eyes were deep gray, and lustrous — yet was their brightness tempered, as it were, by a certain indefinable discretion; they seldom looked abroad, but seemed retired within themselves, quietly musing upon the affairs of life, rather than wandering amid, or partaking of, its excitement; her brow, though somewhat low, was full, and shadowed by a profusion of light hair, which, in her youth, must have been rich and luxuriant; but Time had *there* commenced war with beauty; or, perchance, it might have been sorrow or sickness, that mingled their snows with what had been a superabundance of curling auburn tresses; her throat was beautifully white, though its roundness was gone; but a black velvet band, clasped with a rich ruby brooch (the only ornament she wore) set it off to the best advantage: her entire dress, bearing, and manners, savoured much of what is called puritanism. She would accompany the children to the beach, and, while they wandered about, draw forth her knitting, and, with her eyes fixed on the wide ocean or the passing clouds, continue her mechanical employment without heeding the passers-by, or, so unobtrusive was her appearance, being heeded by them. Or she would read either in a small thick volume, having the appearance of a Bible, or in divers other books, in both ancient and modern binding. She was evidently particular in her dress; her shoes and gloves (her feet and hands, I observed, were delicately formed) were always of superior make and quality, and there was a precision about her dress which led to the belief that she was exact in all things. She did not seem anxious to make my acquaintance, and a nervous tremor in her manner, when conversing with strangers, showed she was either naturally timid, or unused to general society. She blushed, moreover, in addressing you, though, after the awkwardness attending her first salutation had ceased, there was a strange mingling of gentleness and firmness in her conversation. That she was an educated rather than an accomplished woman, was evident; but, though devoted to my three young friends, she did not wish to explain the cause of her affection towards them; not that she affected mystery, but any allusion to their being related to her, or of her kin in any degree, created that species of annoyance which the curious care so little to inflict. Once only, in one of the casual, and somewhat cold, conversations we held together, she observed, that there were ties stronger than those cemented by relationship: with this I perfectly agreed, but added, that it was rather an odd observation for a Scottish woman, whose clan-like sympathies generally pervaded all things. She smiled, — one of those dim, faint smiles which separated her firm-set lips, with an expression of pensive sweetness that accorded well with the gentle meaning of her soft intelligent eyes, — and said to that very clan-like feeling, which my observation appeared to condemn, they owed both their prosperity and success: “In strange countries, when far away from home,” she continued, “the feelings confined to the Mac Gregors, Mac Phersons, and Mac Allisters, extend to each child of the hill and heather; the Scotsman is everywhere the Scotsman’s friend; and, in my humble opinion, this very circumstance, so often urged against us, is much in our favour: if such were the course adopted towards the children of every country, when away from their natural dwellings, there would be a less number dependent on the charity of strangers.”

I agreed most readily with this assertion, and embraced the opportunity of paying a just tribute to the moral and intellectual worth of those who dwell over the border. She appeared gratified.

I have generally noted that the Scotch are never warm, at first, either in their expressions of pleasure or anger: they are early acquainted with the benefits arising from restraint; they learn it in their mother’s arms, herself ever patient and exemplary; they are taught it by their deacons and their

pastors; and a knowledge of the world establishes them in the judicious practice of self-control. I never—however meritorious the restraint undoubtedly is—knew a person to be very popular, who was very particular on this point. We like to be acquainted with those who now and then make little slips in conduct, and occasionally burst forth into certain extravagances, both of management and temper, because they seem so many palpable excuses for our own misdeeds.

"Horace tells me you are going to leave Bognor, and intend passing a month at Hastings," said Miss Millicent to me one morning; "will you take a letter for me to a friend of ours there, a Presbyterian clergyman, who has lately fixed his residence in that neighbourhood?"

Of course I agreed.

"Perhaps," she continued, "you would like his acquaintance: he is a kind, amiable man, not much in your way; but I am sure you would esteem him highly if you knew him."

I did not exactly know what Miss Millicent meant by his "not being exactly in my way," nor did I ask: I suppose she considered me too scatter-brained for a grave acquaintance. I should n't like to have been told *that*, and I did not wish to put the maiden lady into a situation where it would have been necessary to have said a civil bit of fib,—My readers must forgive me! but my busy mind, ever employed on those delectable buildings, denominated *Chateaux en Espagne*, had settled it, that this Mr. Campbell was some antiquated beau of hers, and that one of these days Millicent Morrison might become Millicent Campbell. Still that would not do; my imagination, stretched to its greatest length, could not fancy her a married woman. What would she be without her little peculiarities? and a marrying woman ought to have none; the very pins confining the folds of her shawl on either shoulder, said, as plainly as pins could say, "We were placed here by maiden fingers." Then the white satin bow, at the back of the neat Dunstable straw bonnet, its ends cut exactly into three sharp points, and the two loops of such equal length, that you might fancy the threads were counted; that white satin bow would have stood on end at the idea of the fair hand which arranged its proportions being devoted to any male creature's control: no, that could not be a correct conclusion. Why then did she blush, when delivering me the letter for "Mr. Campbell?" and why did Horace look cunning, and whisper his sister; and why did the little lady blush, and simper, and look grave at her brother, when he repeated the whisper, as well as to say—"For shame, Horace?"

I wish big and little people would never either whisper or discourse silent eloquence with their eyes, in company; it is really very rude, very,—and very perplexing; for it is so natural to put that and that together,—and draw conclusions,—and worry one's brain, about what, after all, is no concern of one's own. Now, as if I had not enough of my own affairs to mind, I continued perplexing myself about the three children and Millicent Morrison—whom I *had* seen,—and about this Mister Jamie Campbell—whom I had *not* seen; and was never fairly content or comfortable, until I had the pleasure of receiving Mr. Campbell, *chez nous*, at St. Leonard's. I love the national accents of all countries,—some more, some less,—they tell always of something that is not present, and set your mind wandering to other lands; they bring to you the sweet south, the sturdy north, the brave and the beautiful of distant countries; the bold or the tranquil landscape is outstretched before you, and often to me comes the memory of much that I shall never see again, when a poor basket-woman in Covent Garden market accosts me in what many a one would call a detestable brogue, with,—“God save you this fine morning, my lady; does your

honour want a basket? and anyhow, whether you does or not, God's fresh blessing be about you!"

Mr. Campbell had not lost the accent of his country, nor had he tried to do so; he appeared a quiet, gentlemanly man, though not altogether what the *élite* would have termed a gentleman; there was a fire in his deep-blue eye, quelled, but not extinguished, which I fancied proved him a man of genius. Like most of his countrymen, he possessed considerable literary information, and a great love for music; but one thing I set my head at rest about at once — he would never do for Millicent Morrison: — he was slovenly in his dress, and his shoes, I observed, were tied with black leather twist instead of riband; this would, as I said, never do for her. But why, then, did she blush? We shall see.

The following Sunday confirmed my opinion, that Mr. Campbell was a man of genius, and that his talents, far from being hid under a bushel, were brightly burning, kindled by a holy and well-directed zeal for the benefit of his congregation. There was something wild and picturesque in the situation of his little chapel, which called to mind the persecuting days, when the disciples of the true faith had not where to lay their heads: it was nested almost in the cleft of the hill-side; and from the little, clean, and well-preserved platform, which fronted the entrance, you over-looked the wooded valley — the distant town — and the boundless ocean, stretching wide and away; the sunbeams dancing with its waves, and the blue arch of heaven, untainted on that bright morning by a single cloud, reflected in its bosom. I remember the text he worked upon so beautifully — it was a simple but a joyous one to the believing Christian; it involved no abstruse doctrinal points; it was one of those excellent and heaven-constructed sentences which lead the mind from earth to heaven by a single image —

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

He described fully and forcibly the bitter burden of sin, giving due weight to its temptations and its fascinations in the first instance, but proving how, in the end, it became wearisome to the lightest spirit — how it fretted, and festered, and galled, and oppressed, all who imagined that the pleasures of this life could satisfy that craving after happiness and immortality so inseparable from our nature. After descanting upon the first portion of the sentence, with rare and fervid eloquence, he turned to the promise so touchingly given by our Saviour, — "I will give you rest:" — he painted "the rest" signified by the Son of God in colours so holy, that, as for a moment my eyes wandered through the open window upon the outstretched landscape, I felt as if his moral pencil had been dipped in the tranquillity of nature, and drank with thankfulness of the rivers of living waters which his eloquence poured upon a soul thirsting for a knowledge of the love of God: — then came the hymn, and it was impossible to look up to the gorgeous sky, or out upon the bounteous earth, without feeling the positive truth that

His ways are just, His counsels wise.

I forgot the slovenly habits, and ceased to think that the shoes were fastened with leather twist; I even, on my return to St. Leonard's, indulged in the hope that Millicent Morrison might yet become Millicent Campbell. There is no saying how long this reverie might have continued, had not Mr. Campbell himself, accompanied by a — wife — and three children, overtaken my lagging footsteps. "Mrs. Campbell wished to be introduced to you; she only returned yesterday from a visit to her father's, in Argyleshire, or she would have called before." Alas! alas! was poor castlebuilder ever so confounded! I made the best of it, however, and agreed to take a friendly cup of tea with "the Campbells," the next evening. I will at once

pass over the frugal but kind hospitality of my hosts, and only mention, that very soon I heard a story I have never forgotten — a story I have prized and cherished — a tale of forbearance and good faith — converting an old maid into a heroine, exalting my sex as I best love to see them exalted, more by their virtues than their knowledge. The story was of MILLY OF THE MANSE.

"She was a winsome bonny lass, when I first knew her," said Mr. Campbell, "blithe — and before all women I ever met for singing Allan Ramsay's ballads, or the songs of Robbie Burns; she was her father's darling, her mother's pride, and indeed, I may say, the pride of all the congregation; for her father was the pastor of Kirk-Haverling, and lived at Haverling Manse. She certainly," continued Mr. Campbell, after pausing for a moment, "was the bonniest and blithest lass I had ever met."

"That may be," observed the minister's wife, "but, Jamie, I never could think Miss Milly as handsome as you say."

"Oh!" replied Mr. Campbell, — "I thought quite as slyly as was consistent in a minister, — "she was the bonniest and blithest lass I had ever met *then*; it was before I saw you, Nannie." The respectable "Nannie" smiled a smile that well became her round and ample countenance; and her husband proceeded. "Ronald M'Lean was the only son of the M'Lean, a laird of family and power, but of little wealth; for what remained from ancient times had been spent in keeping up a style and appearance to please the whim of Ronald's mother, an English lady certainly of great beauty. The laird loved her with Scottish truth, and more than Scottish fervour, and cared not what he did so she was pleased. Young Ronald had too much of the spirit of the clan in him to be a great favourite with his English parent, who wished him to be sent to an English school. But this his father stoutly refused; and the boy was accordingly placed under the care of Duncan Morrison of Haverling, who had a rich reputation as a classic, and a still richer as a moral man. I was at that time a pupil in the same house, though under very different circumstances from Ronald M'Lean. He was a laird's son, and I was the only child of the Widow Campbell of Hawthornden — he came to school with a fine footman behind him, I came by myself — he had a horse to carry his luggage, and my store was contained in a handkerchief."

"In a trunk — a small trunk," interrupted Mrs. Campbell.

"No, Nanny, it was my poor mother's best silk handkerchief."

"If it was n't a hair trunk, it was a box, with maybe a handkerchief lapped round it," persisted the worthy woman, anxious for her husband's dignity on all points.

"No, it was only a handkerchief; do I not remember my mother —?"

"Go on," interrupted Mrs. Campbell.

"I will," said the minister; "but the handkerchief?" ("It was a trunk, I know," murmured Mrs. Campbell, but in so low a tone as to be heard only by me, who sat next her,) "did not prevent my being treated by all the house, Milly included, as well as if I had been a laird in prospect; — they were happy days, both for me and Ronald, but especially for Ronald, who secured the love of a heart that was above all price. Millicent and the young laird grew together, and studied together, and in all studies where patience and application were necessary, Milly outdid us all; she was the personification of contented industry and innocent enjoyment; the admired of the rich, the beloved of the poor. It was seen by all at the Manse, except Milly's father and mother, that Ronald M'Mean loved her with a strong and fervid affection, such as men, however they may change

in other matters, can feel but once — and Milly was not slow in loving in return. I very much doubt if Millicent would have given up her heart so entirely to this affection, had not the lady of M'Lean, much struck with her beauty and acquirements, invited her to spend a few months at M'Lean Castle, an invitation she was proud to accept; and while there the lady treated her with so much kindness, and, as Milly afterwards said, 'so like a mother,' that she felt assured, poor thing! that the proud lady knew and encouraged her attachment towards her son: it was natural enough for her to think so — and indeed Ronald believed the same — natural enough too, in him — though bitter was the struggle, and hard the trial, which taught them the contrary.

"One morning, during her stay with the M'Leans, Milly was sent for to Mrs. M'Lean's dressing-room earlier than usual: and there were the laird and his proud lady, stiff and cold enough; and, instead of kissing her 'sweet Scotch girl,' as she used on other occasions, she permitted her to stand, while she haughtily inquired, how she had dared to suffer her son to breathe his affection towards her, while under *her* roof? she moreover upbraided her as an artful, designing creature; and concluded by an injunction that she should quit her house for ever, and see her son no more. You may suppose that Milly waited not to be twice bidden; her knowledge of propriety prevented that; nor, indeed, so bitterly hurt was she, had she the thought or wish to say good-bye to him she loved so dearly. 'The blessing of the Lord would not be with me,' she murmured in the silence of her own heart, 'if I encouraged him in disobedience; and I will show the great lady of M'Lean that I can be as proud as she is.'

"It was a sinful thought," quoth Mrs. Campbell.

"So it was, Nannie, I'll allow," replied her gentle husband; "but there are times when the wounded spirit stirs within the best of us, and we cannot, without much prayer, command it to be still."

"That's true, Jamie," quoth she again; "you are aye on the side of mercy."

■ was pleased to see, that though she might be a trifle jealous of Millicent Morrison, she honoured her husband's opinion; and I also observed that her eyes glistened whenever he uttered a sentiment of a good or pious tendency.

"She went home without leaving word or token for poor Ronald, who came to the manse the next day in a woful taking. By this time her heart had become softened; and she argued moreover with herself, that she might meet him once more, just to bid him good-bye for ever; and seeing him from her window pacing up and down the little flower-garden he had so often assisted her to cultivate, she just slipped on her hood, and stood before him.

"The young man, at first, neither sighed nor spoke, but he looked into her face as he would read her soul, which was then an easy thing, for her mind was as an open book, full of good thoughts and maidenly wisdom, devoid of guile, and simple withal as a mountain dove. I am no way skilled in love passages — they are foolish, and only snares for wisdom, beguiling men and women of their good resolutions; and so it was in this case; for Milly, who, notwithstanding Mrs. M'Lean's harshness, had formed the resolution of giving up all communion with Roland, was persuaded; and without her parents' sanction, to meet him once more in a deep glen, where they had often wandered before it was considered a sin for either to love what to them appeared most lovely upon earth. I cannot altogether acquit Mrs. Morrison of blame in this transaction: — true, the young people had never spoken to her of the affection subsisting between them, but I am sure she knew it; and she ought to have foreseen that, being so much together, with similar pursuits, and a suitable difference of age,

nothing was more natural than that they should become attached, in defiance of prudential considerations. The master himself, poor man, knew naught of such matters; he possessed book-learning enough to stock a university, but he was aye careless of the things of this life, and no ways economical in the management of his homestead."

"I never blamed the Dominie for that," said Mrs. Campbell, "for it is the woman's business; but what I censured the mother for, was the belief she got into her head, that Milly's beauty and Milly's cleverness made her a fit match for e'er a laird in Scotland. Mothers work ill for their daughters instead of good, by such whimsies."

"So they do, Nannie; and yet I mind your turning up your nose at Mrs. Grace, the curate's wife, when she hinted, that her William and our Maggy might be married yet."

Mrs. Campbell laughed, saying only in reply, "But Willy is such a foxy, mischievous ape, and every one says Maggy is so handsome."

"She is very like you, my love," replied the minister, and continued:—

"Milly was at her tryst by the time appointed. She sat on the same bank where she had often sat before with her lover. She looked at the sky; the evening was closing in—the stars, one by one, were stealing up the blue arch of heaven—the dewy softness of night was over the landscape; still he came not—the loved, the looked-for, was not there; her heart beat more quickly—she scanned the hill, the wooded glen—still he came not; there was a perfect stillness in the air and on the earth, and no sound disturbed the serenity of nature, save the occasional bark of the shepherd's dog coming over the mountain, or the splash of the water-fowl in the deep-blue lake at her feet. It was a delicious hour, yet she heeded it not; her heart was sair—and at last the unbidden tears rolled down her cheeks as if that heart would break. Suddenly came the sound of a foot-step; she dashed the memorials of sorrow away, and the feel of 'Why does he not come? peradventure some evil hath befallen him,' was succeeded by the resolution of assuming an angry manner, though displeasure was far from her heart. In another moment—not Ronald—but the M'Lean himself stood at her side. Now indeed was she alarmed; and grasping the arm of the tall chieftain, demanded, with an earnestness which told her feelings, where Ronald was.

"He seated the trembling girl on the bank, and took his place beside her. M'Lean was a stern, but not a cold-hearted man, and he felt, more than he cared to express at home, for the innocent and artless creature who loved his son with such devotion; he thought highly of her, for thinking highly of that which belonged to him; and it was some time before he was able to make the communication he knew must be made. Roland M'Lean had fallen from his horse that morning, and been much injured. He had confided to a favourite servant his desire that Milly should be made acquainted with his misfortune, as an excuse for breaking his appointment. The servant, with the dread of his mistress before his eyes, told her of it; and thus it was that the father, and not the son, kept the expected tryst. 'And now, Millicent, I am come to speak to, to commune with you, not to reproach or chide you for a circumstance which we ought all to have foreseen, and over which, poor girl, as yet, you have had no control. It will not be always thus; for you have reason, and I am about to call upon you to exercise it, not for your own, but for Ronald's benefit.'

"'Anything for his benefit,' she replied, 'I will gladly do.'

"'Do you know, Milly, that you have it in your power to establish the house of the M'Lean in all its former grandeur, or to plunge it into deeper difficulties than it has yet known?'

"'I am sure, laird,—'interrupted Milly, eagerly.

"'Make no rash promises—nothing rash will I listen to,' said the

M'Lean, — 'hear me — hear me, calmly: Roland loves you — loves you now fondly, truly — but young men change — marriage, blessed and holy though it be, cannot always restrain the wandering thoughts of man — and even if you were bound together in the holy bonds of matrimony, Ronald might — nay, I am sure he would, change.' Millicent seemed as though she had not heard aright, and then shook her head. 'Men all change,' repeated the laird.

"You were aye accounted a good husband," observed Milly.

"I trust I have been so," he replied.

"Then, laird, you have no changed," added the minister's daughter; 'and why suppose Ronald unlike his father?'

"M'Lean looked at her for a moment, baffled by her simplicity and good sense. 'But,' said he, 'it was not that I meant to speak of; — have you never heard of Lady Lucy Graham, the heiress of thousands of acres, and thousands to stock them, too?'

"The auld maid of Graham Hall?" inquired Milly, quite unsuspectingly.

"She is not to say auld — not forty, I should think — nor near. Well, she loves my son, and would give up her houses, her kye, her lands, her money, for the love you hold."

"I dare say she would," replied Millicent, proudly, 'and well she might; — houses, kye, and lands; — Oh! what are they to the love of Roland M'Lean?' and then, ashamed that she had gone so far, she hid her blushing cheeks between her hands.

"The laird took her hand kindly within his. Intent as he was on other matters, there was something in Milly's love — young, innocent, and beautiful as she was — something in her love for his son so true and blameless, that he was proud of the very beauty of the flower whose innocent bloom he was about to destroy. 'You know, Milly, that Roland is not rich.'

"I do know it, laird; but he is rich enough in the graces and blessings of a great mind — God has been bountiful to the M'Leans."

"Granted; but you heard what his mother said."

"I have no forgotten it, sir," replied the maiden, 'and think not so meanly of me as to suppose that, because I kept, or meant to keep tryst with him to-night, it was to be more to him than I have ever been — far, far from it — I would but have bid him farewell, — and tauld him not to think of me — though — though —' she burst into tears, and her head sunk upon her bosom.

"I have told you we are not rich, Millicent; I must now tell you more — we are poor."

"A weel! a weel! —' she said, the accent of her native land becoming stronger as her feelings were more wrought upon; 'it is na disgrace.'

"The girl is no fool, thought the laird; and yet I would rather have a fool, or, better still, a woman of the world, to manage, than this right-minded creature; I should know how to deal with the one and the other, but she baffles me.

"But it is a disgrace, young woman — a disgrace for a lord, or even a private gentleman, to want the means of keeping up his rank. 'How would you like to see me — or Roland — in a jail?' Millicent clasped her hands and twisted her fingers together, while he continued — 'And yet this must happen — this must be, unless you give him positively up, and refuse of yourself to see or commune with him.'

"She raised her eyes, trembling in the moonlight, to the laird's countenance, — it was still and pale.

"I intended to tell him *that*, to-night."

"And to abide by it?"

"Yes; I never say one thing and mean another. I meant, laird, to abide

by it—unless—’ she paused; and then added, ‘unless it made him as miserable as I—feared—I thought it would.’

“The laird saw it would never do to go on at this rate, that nothing could be gained by it, and therefore resolved to try his hand at his lady’s plan: he repeated his assurance that such were his embarrassments that a very little time would witness his ruin, unless some decided steps were taken to prevent it; he told her that Roland could possess the hand of Lady Lucy Graham, if he chose to take it; and that nothing would then be wanting to make them flourish. Again Millicent’s eyes scanned the laird’s countenance, but the expression was changed:—‘And so,’ she said, ‘you would sell your son to save yourself?’ M’Lean grew angry—he reproached her with presumption—he repeated the insinuations his wife had more coarsely used; but Millicent’s spirit would not brook such treatment. She rose as he rose; and the man of the world saw that more could be accomplished by touching her feelings than rousing her pride. His manner again became gentle; he descanted on the high name brought low—on the great trampled in the dust—on the misery that would rest upon her, if she saw a husband, such as Roland, steeped to the very lips in poverty, with the consciousness that it was *she* who had done this. He assured her that his mother’s curse would rest upon him to the last hour, if their destinies were ever united; and he, therefore, implored her to think of the desolation she would entail upon them all, by persisting in her acquaintance with his son.

“‘Marry Lady Lucy Graham! marry Lady Lucy Graham!’ she repeated time after time—‘And you, laird, think he would marry Lady Lucy Graham?’

“‘I know he would; he told me himself that if it were not for his promise to you, he would marry her at once.’

“‘He said that?’ she added; and again suspiciously perused his countenance. ‘And ye think that, before his life was ended, he would be happier with her than with me?’

“‘God witness for me, I do!’ said the laird. ‘How, think ye, could a M’Lean abide poverty and the disgrace of a prison to any of his kith or kin?’

“With the rapidity of thought Milly’s mind glanced back to Ronald’s habits, Ronald’s tastes, Ronald’s opinions; and the review confirmed his father’s statement: his habits were expensive, his tastes refined, his opinions extravagant. She had often thought so—but, then, he was a laird, and a M’Lean; and she looked upon their rude magnificence as an heritage. After a pause,—and during that pause much that was great, much that was truly noble, rallied in her soul,—she drew forth from her bosom a small pocket-book, and, tearing out a leaf, wrote a few sentences upon it; then, rising from the sward whereon she had knelt to write, she stood before the laird with that right noble dignity of manner which those only possess whose bodies are the temples of living and active virtue.

“‘Laird of M’Lean, you come of a noble race; and though it may be but a vain and silly thing, yet I have been taught to believe, that as the richest soil yields the best fruits, so the best blood gives forth the most glorious actions. For myself, I was born in a cottage, I have lived in a cottage, and, God willing, may die in one. We who are so born, and so to die, cannot be expected to understand much that you have said; but you have called God to witness your belief, that before your son’s life was ended, he would be happier with Lady Lucy Graham than with me; that God heard—and now sees us both: if such be really your belief, give him this paper—and—then—I shall see his face no more.—If—if—you know of any thing to change your opinion, oh! do not, do not for the sake of the gold that glitters, sell the happiness of such as Ronald M’Lean! And now, laird, God be wi’ you! and from my heart I pray, that you may no’ have cause to mourn for keeping this tryst with Milly of the Manse.’

"About a week after this Milly went to visit an aunt who was far away in Edinburgh; and before she came back to her father's manse, the country and the bells had rung with tales and joy—for that the houses of M'Lean and Graham were now one. Before her return home, her mother had died suddenly. Here was a divided grief, and though I thought I understood it all, I could not for my life tell what change had come over Millicent Morrison. She was more useful in the house; as studious in the library; she conversed as freely; but there was certainly a change—little odds and ends of bitterness—not ill-temper either, but positive bitterness would mingle with, or rather, like a wasp's sting, end her conversations. She was rather watchful than abstracted, and more keen than I had known her—not worldly-minded, and yet looking after trifles; fonder than I thought quite be seemed a woman of diving into people's motives; not so fond of birds or flowers as she used to be, for those are the affections of a simple and unseared mind. She was not much thinner, nor much paler, but her features had acquired the acuteness of her mind; in short, I cannot tell how it was—but Milly was changed."

"That was about the time I'm thinking you fell in love with her yerself," said Mrs. Campbell, taking advantage of the minister's pause, and saying so between the sobered mirthfulness of jest, and the seriousness of a remembered displeasure. The good lady's husband blushed, positively blushed, (how odd, and queer, and awkward is a man's blush!) and rubbed his forehead, as if to obliterate the sense of his timidity; and both his wife and myself were malicious enough to enjoy his confusion.

"I will not deny that—I—I—in short, she refused—better and greater than I—for, notwithstanding the change, Milly of the Manse was the desired of many hearts. And now to the dole of the story:—God forgive old M'Lean and his bitter lady! for how they could ever think that such as Ronald could be happy with Lady Lucy, is what I could never understand; nor could I quite make out how they got him to give up Milly. Disappointed and heart-broken, the poor fellow rushed into all sorts of extravagances; he seemed to care for nothing, to stick at nothing. And at last all the country cried, Shame upon him!—all, all but *one*—there was *one* who never joined the cry that was raised against him—*one* who never believed that he was so very wicked, though he had been tempted to commit grievous sin.

"Ten years had not passed from the time of the auld laird's keeping the tryst of the young, when Castle M'Lean was advertised to be sold by public roup, and Lady Lucy had burst a blood-vessel in a fit of passion, on learning the utter destruction of all her property. Where was Ronald M'Lean? Ronald M'Lean had gone to India. And where was the auld laird, whose family pride had wrought such desolation?—even in the cauld and noisome cell of the jail he had dreaded. It was night, and the jail gate was opened to a neat and well-dressed female, who had passed the day within the prison walls—the minister of peace and consolation to the old white-headed chieftain, who had wrecked the happiness of that fair and excellent girl, and with it foundered the hopes and aspirations of his first-born and only son. Poor Millicent! not a week passed without her spending one, and often two days with M'Lean. And it was a calm and holy sight, to see that woman, still lovely and still young, sitting at the old chieftain's feet reading him passages from holy writ, and paying him that homage in which his heart delighted, till the last, which soon arrived, for his spirit was bowed and broken. I forgot to tell you that his wife had never lived to see her son's temporary prosperity; she died before his marriage. When it was known that M'Lean was dead, all the old chiefs seemed to think that it was a point of duty, more, in my mind, connected with their own station than the old gentleman's merits, to give him a grand funeral, though he might have nearly

starved in prison but for the exertions of Milly of the Manse. However, the pail and the pibroch were not wanting, and scores of bare-legged gillies came down from the highlands: and Milly stood at one of the windows in the market-place to see it all pass; and though the tear of womanly feeling was in her eye, there was an expression of such scorn and contempt upon her lip, that I cared not to look on it a second time.

"After a lapse of about six years, word came that Ronald M'Lean had married — married again in India! and all I heard Millicent say, was, 'So best.' But when she made tea for us — (I was staying for a few days, at the time, with her father) — when she made tea for us in the evening, I perceived that her eyes were red, and that she put three times her usual quantity of tea into the teapot, which was uncommon for her who was so frugal.

"Now comes the wonder of the story; — a brother of the minister, one whom he had not seen since his boyhood, died in Mexico, and all the accumulated hoards of years on years came to Millicent Morrison, in right of her father; he, poor body, was nearly childish from age. Here was a change — a wonderful change for Milly, not only in that it made her independent, and even rich, but, that it showed forth her character in its true and perfect light. Poverty had been accounted to her a crime — it had stood between her and her earthly happiness — it had formed a barrier, as it always does, between what might be almost termed the living and the dead: the knowledge that she was poor had made her proud, and cold, and stern; and fearful that her advances would be repulsed because of her poverty, she made none. Nor would she receive the overtures of strangers kindly, for she thought, 'When they find me poor, I shall be insulted:' this, as she now confesses, was a sinful pride; but the wealth which puffs up so many, made her gentle and humble as the shorn lamb. It is only a noble mind that can support prosperity; every one tries to bear up against adversity, but prosperity is the touchstone of greatness.

"The quiet calm smile came back to Millicent's rigid lip; gentleness again reigned over all her actions. She was not bitter in word as she had been; and, as her sphere of doing good increased, she appeared cheerful — almost happy; yet did I never hear her sing. And, I have marked, a deepened blush would suffuse her cheek, whenever the M'Lean was alluded to, which certainly was not often the case — for the unfortunate are soon forgotten.

"I had been married some time; the poor auld minister, full of years, had been gathered to his fathers, and a neat white marble slab, raised by the hand of his affectionate daughter, marked out the place of his final rest, in the kirk of Haverling. Milly had settled fairly down into an old maid, and indulged in many of the whimsies which are overlooked in a married woman, but are put down as tokens of the sisterhood when a lady arrives at a certain age. (Oh! Oh! thought I.) She had a gray cat, lively, though not mischievous. She was fond of knitting and patchwork, and wofully particular in the shape and fashioning of the bit ribands to trim her caps and bonnets; but she was actively benevolent — worshipped by the poor — respected by the rich. It might have been, as nearly as I remember, about seven years after the news that Ronald M'Lean was again married in India, that Millicent Morrison came to my house, — for I was the oldest friend of the family in existence, — and after some difficulty, and many sorrowing looks, produced a letter, which she permitted me to transcribe." The minister took it out of his desk.

"When you receive this, Millicent, the hand that pens it will be cold as the clay of this burning country, and the Ronald whom you once, and I would fain hope, always loved, will be then no more. I have heard of

you, Milly — heard of your good fortune — and I believe in your faithfulness. My life has been a turbulent dream, beginning in ambition, ending in disappointment. One thing hangs heavily at my heart — my old father — he died in a jail, which would have been utterly desolate but for you. Milly, how great was your revenge! — may God bless — may God reward you — I cannot. My wife will be the bearer of this to England; she is of another country — she knows nothing of European habits, and in Scotland the M'Lean has now no friends; perhaps I deserve it — but *she* does not. There are reasons why she cannot remain here, which you will hear her explain, that is — but — I do hope that you may meet. She is a guileless, simple Indian girl, only a girl — not yet twenty, though the mother of three children; feel for her — pity her — for she loved me, 'not wisely, but too well.' You bore our separation like a heroine — she will, I know, only bear it like a woman — and hers will be the same as ours, for an earthly eternity. God bless you, Milly. Love Annabel for my sake — no, not for mine, for you ought not to love me, but for her own sweet sake — and farewell — farewell for ever — EVER.

"R. M'L."

"And they are come to England?" I said. 'They are,' she replied; and it was the first time I ever saw her weep: now the tears rolled rapidly and heavily down her cheeks. 'They are come, but he is gone; and though people say that insensibility comes with age, — and I am not young, — God knows how gladly I would have died to save the life of Ronald M'Lean — died to save him for his wife and helpless children; they are at Portsmouth.'

"And you —?"

"I am going there directly. I have hired a carriage for the purpose; for it is no fit that Ronald M'Lean's wife and bairns should tramp the country in a public coach, as if they had nae bluid in their veins. If they want worldly gear, they must share of all I have; and whether they do or no, they shall not need a friend.' 'You shall not go alone, Miss Milly,' I replied; 'I too will welcome M'Lean's widow; and I know Mrs. Campbell will be proud to go with us.' It was Millicent's first visit to England; and we did all we could to rouse her attention to the scenery, and the difference so palpably existing between Scotland and this cultivated country: but her mind was far away — and at last we agreed it was the wisest plan to leave her to herself. My Nancy enjoyed the journey much; for it was far pleasanter going that way, than being jolted inside a public coach."

"That's like ye'r bundle story," interrupted Mrs. Campbell, turning up her really pretty little nose, "that's like ye'r bundle story — as if I was never in a private carriage till then; — I've been in the Duchess of Buccleugh's carriage, before now." And she looked at him as one should say, "I wish you would not be so blunt before strangers."

"I remember it," replied the minister, quietly; "it was when Mistress Laurie Grant, her companion, your own first-cousin, broke her leg, and you went with her to the doctor's."

"Never mind — how should you ken. Surely it was her grace's carriage, at all events," replied the worthy woman.

"We found the widow of Ronald M'Lean a poor delicate Indian creature, who could do nothing for herself, and less for others — hardly able to rise off the sofa — with hands that could not work, and feet that could not walk — with a pale brown cheek, and black soft gazelle eyes that seemed fainting for the sun, whose rays they had fed upon in her own bright land: her manners were languid and ladylike, and there was a tone of tender and deep feeling in her low musical voice, that rendered her desolate situation ten times more interesting — desolate indeed it was. What her reasons for seeking a

refuge in Scotland were, was known only to Millicent and herself; but she made no secret of her straitened circumstances; and her helplessness was the most pitiable I ever witnessed. Added to the languid bearing so characteristic of every Indian, she was languid also from ill health, and her pallid cheek, occasionally flushed by a deep crimson spot, betokened a disease which I shuddered but to think upon. She would sit for hours and days caressing her children, or gazing upon a miniature — *his* likeness — which she always wore round her neck. As soon as she was able to travel, Millicent bore her and hers to her own home; and the widow of the proud house of M'Lean was indebted to the despised Milly of the Manse for food and shelter. My fears as to the dangerous nature of the disease which was preying upon her, from her first arrival in England, were confirmed; the hot-house plant could not bear removal to a colder clime — and she drooped and drooped — and for two years Milly tended her sick bed, until it became the bed of death. It was not one of her least trials that the temper of an Indian, ever hard to bear, was unequal to support with firmness the struggles of departed nature. Millicent was obliged to listen to her complainings, and to endure, as well as she could, the weak petulance of the mother, and the tiresome, tormenting noise (was ever old maid so situated!) of three romping, spoiled children. Yet she not only bore them, but was cheerful under all these trials; and God greatly blessed her exertions: for, though that Indian lady's soul was in a state of pitiable darkness when she came to England, before she died she had sought and found the Saviour — and sought and found Him through the instrumentality of the humble Milly. I had remained with M'Lean's wife on one particular evening — and we had enjoyed much profitable conversation during the time. It was a painful, and yet a pleasing thing for me to witness the struggles the poor lady underwent, trying to conquer her constitutional weakness and irritability of temper — the spirit warring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. If betrayed into error, she so quickly perceived her fault, and strove so earnestly to remove the predilection to evil, that it was impossible not to love the frail and fragile being who was so quickly hastening to join, as she hoped, her Ronald in another world. As I wished her good night, I thought she appeared more feeble than usual, and her eyes gleamed from out her pale thin countenance with an unearthly brightness. 'This trial will soon pass away now,' I said to Milly, as she followed me to the door. 'The poor children!' sighed Millicent. 'Ay, indeed, the poor children,' I repeated, 'what will become of them?' 'I have no kin,' she replied; 'and even if I had, I think that love is stronger than blood: I will be to them as much a mother as I can — and, by the protection of the Lord, and your advice, I trust they will not disgrace their name.' 'But, my dear Miss Milly, you are not aware of the fresh trials you are bringing on yourself. Norman Cunningham, the late laird's fourth cousin, has offered to take the boy.'

"And breed him up to fish and shoot — without heeding God's counsel, or caring for man's — then turn him off into a regiment, to be shot at like a popinjay! No, no — I'll do my best with the three. You know, I am only an old maid,' she continued, faintly smiling, 'and used to trials; and, like all things else, they are nothing when you grow accustomed to them. God's will be done! this care will save the fag end of my life from being spent either selfishly or uselessly; and, maybe, the young creatures, when they grow up, will have an affection for her who cared for them all so well; — it takes the desolate feel from about one's heart, to have something to live for and love.' This was a long speech for Milly; and I went home through the starlight, pondering upon the dispensations of the Almighty, and thinking to myself, how hard it is for us to pass right judgment upon each other. No one, to see that stiff, formal, particular old maiden, would

conjecture that so warm, so generous, so tender a heart dwelt within her bosom — that the love she imbibed in early youth kindled, in its own fitting shrine, a pure and steady flame, which burned as brightly as if it had been fed with smiles — not fanned by sighs. I thought — what was there could extinguish woman's love! — a passion scoffed at by those who cannot comprehend its height, its depth, its strength, its duration: sorrow quenches it not — steep it in tears, they but renovate its lustre; crown it with thorns, the blood that trickles from the wounds is as incense on the altar; talk of death, it laughs at the dagger and the bowl, as if they were but

‘The baseless fabrics of a vision.’”

The minister again paused; his wife rubbed her eyes more than once, and then, with the dew still moist upon their lids, seized her husband's hand, and kissing it with genuine emotion, forgetful of a stranger's presence, she exclaimed, “Ah! Jamie Campbell, I wish I had been ye'r first love, and then maybe you'd have spoken of me as you have spoken of her.” He pressed his wife to his bosom; and, looking in her face, tenderly replied: —

“I spoke of the love of all women, not of one only. I believe you would do as much for me as Milly did for Ronald M'Lean. Thank God, it is not needed.”

“I was right,” thought I to myself. “After all — I *was* right — there was an *affaire de cœur* here — and *that* made Milly blush.”

“But the lady, sir?” said I.

“Oh! yes — I had forgotten her: she fell into a soft sleep, from which she awoke in about an hour, and in a low voice called Milly, who came instantly to her side.

“‘My children!’ said the young Indian mother. In a few moments they were in the room: she kissed them — blessed them all; then taking a small jewel-casket that was under her pillow, she fastened round the neck of her eldest girl poor Ronald's miniature. She then selected a rich clasp of rubies, and placing it in Milly's hand, added, ‘His hair and mine are within this. — Tell me — tell me,’ she continued, rallying her strength for the question, ‘do you think *he* is in heaven?’

“‘Through the Redeemer's mercy, I believe it,’ replied Milly, deeply affected.

“‘And — I — I meet him there?’ She clasped her hands for a brief space — tried again to speak, but the power was gone; she motioned the children to go near Millicent, who kissed them all, and pressed them in her arms; a light and heavenly smile passed over the lady's beautiful lips; they parted — she moved her hands once — and only once — convulsively — and all was over.

“You know the rest; having of course discovered that the children you so much admired are those of Millicent Morrison's adoption. She has discarded the gray cat, pays for her board and lodging, and I believe, only suffers one pet, a water-spaniel, to share her attentions with her wards.”

“I am astonished,” said I, “that Ronald M'Lean did not say more about his son: one would have thought he would have been pleased and proud to transmit his name, a name so old, to posterity.”

“I rather think he had learned the emptiness of seeking to keep up appearances without suitable means.

“Poor Milly!”

“GREAT MILLY!” exclaimed the minister, “how delighted I should be, to see all maids, wives, and widows — as useful as Milly of the Manse!”

It is astonishing how my predilection for old maids increases!

THE STRUGGLE.

THE TRIALS OF GRACE HUNTLEY.

"Virtue is not more exempt than vice from the ills of fate : but it contains within itself always an energy to resist them, and sometimes an anodyne to sooth."

THE DISOWNED.

"We will call her Grace," said a pale, delicate-looking young woman to her husband, as she raised the white flannel hood, that he might gaze upon the features of their new-born babe. "Abel, I never expected to be the mother of a living child ; but God has been merciful ; so we will give to her the gentle name of Grace ; and, dearest, let us pray that, in all the troubles and trials of life, not the name merely, but the spirit, may dwell with her!"

It was only a few weeks afterwards that the grave closed over the fair young mother ; but the blessing wherewith she had blessed her child had been heard and registered in heaven.

* * * * *

"You are not angry with me, my own dear father — not angry with your poor Grace — and you will forgive Joseph Huntley ! Oh !" added the girl playfully, "if we youngsters could but get your wisdom, without your wrinkles, what wonderful creatures we should be !"

"My child, my child ! age will bring wrinkles, as autumn brings withered leaves ; yet wisdom doth not always come with years. But our hearts do not grow old, girl ; so I forgive you !"

"And Joseph too, father ?"

The schoolmaster (for such was his calling) shook his head. "Of all the youths it has been my fortune to instruct, I never met with so wilful a boy as Joseph Huntley."

"He is not a boy now, father ; you forget he is out of his time."

"So much the worse. His master, worthy Matthew Greenshaw, tells me he spoils more mahogany than any apprentice that ever entered his house ; and you know, Grace, the desk he made, as a present for me last Christmas, tumbled to pieces the second time I leaned upon it."

"Dear father, you lean your elbows so heavily ! But Joseph has made you such a pretty ruler of cherry-tree wood !"

"I believe he is a kind-hearted fellow ; but, dear Grace, a kind heart alone will not ensure prosperity ; there must be forethought, and industry, and discretion. Yet, truth to say, I fear your heart is too much set upon this same Joseph Huntley. Whatever he does, you view in one light, and I in another. I would not judge harshly, my dear child ; yet do I wish it had pleased God your mother had lived : it is no easy thing for a man to bring up a daughter, and make her learned in woman's craft, and other matters meet for her to understand. A pains-taking schoolmaster, like myself, has but small opportunity of cultivating a knowledge of female sentiment ; yet have I not been a bad father, for never did I harbour the thought

of giving a second mother dominion over you ; and, albeit you are not skilled in the arts of cross-stitch, back-stitch, or Quaker's hem, which our good neighbour Mrs. Craddock so exceedingly laments, yet is our house clean and well ordered — and few girls comprehend better the first four rules of arithmetic, or can write a fairer hand, than my own Grace." The simple-minded man looked upon his darling child for a few moments, while a feeling of pride irradiated his countenance ; a change, however, soon passed over it, a change striking, yet not uncommon — a change from pride to piety ; his eye moistened, and his voice faltered, as, laying his hand upon the beautiful head of his only one, he continued : " And when I am laid in my grave, Grace, you will remember that your poor old father taught you more than mere writing and ciphering ; you will remember our quiet evenings, when you sat upon this footstool, and we conversed together on the piety of the Danish Canute, who showed unto his courtiers the vanity of earthly grandeur by a very simple expedient ; — on the dignity and purity of our English Alfred, whose virtues were so happily tempered, so justly blended, that each prevented the other from exceeding its proper bounds ; — or on the grace and beauty of Cornelia, who regarded her noble children as the richest jewels a matron could possess. You will also call to mind passages of our sublime Milton, which you learned as a recreation from graver studies ; but, above all, my child will bear in her memory our holy and simple Sabbath enjoyments — the free, unfettered day, rightly appreciated only by those who toil wearily through the week — the clear breezy morning — the early prayer — the walk to the village church — the evening sacrifice in our own cottage. Ah ! I could never read the story of Joseph and his brethren, or the sweet reply of Ruth to her mother, without weeping ; and you, too, Grace, — can you ever forget the parable of the five wise virgins ? How often have I prayed that the Lord, when he came, might find us watching ! And surely my prayers are heard, for you are a good girl, Grace — although something wilful in the matter of Joseph Huntley, who, by the way, I see coming over the meadow. Perhaps he can mend my desk."

" Then you forgive him, father ?"

" Forgive him ! — why, yes ; for, to own the truth, I forget what it was I was angry about ! Do you remember ?"

" O ! never mind, dear father, never mind !" and Grace kissed her father affectionately, but too well pleased that his memory was somewhat, and not unfrequently, treacherous on late events.

It would, in all human probability, have been far happier for Grace had her mother lived. Abel had spoken truly in saying he had but small opportunity of cultivating a knowledge of what he designated " female sentiment ;" and though he formed his daughter's mind to the best of his ability, yet he formed, or rather directed it, so as to draw forth the higher and nobler faculties, while those that are called into action by the every-day and homely occurrences of life were, comparatively, neglected. It was fortunate for Grace that she was wholly exempt from those small vanities which so often obtain dominion over females who acquire only a moderate degree of information. But she was preserved by the halo and protection of pure and self-denying religious impressions. There are those whose apparent belief emanates from circumstances — the seed is scattered by the way-side, and the fowls of the air may pick or uproot it. But the religion of the schoolmaster's daughter was not of this kind. The seed had been sown in good ground, and its fruit was peace, hope, love, and a tender caring for others — the only unquestionable proof of true charity. She was, as her father has said, wilful in the matter of Joseph Huntley, and it was as regarded him that a mother's watchfulness was more especially needed. That the old man was dissatisfied with the person on whom her affections had

been placed was evident, since observations such as those I have recorded were of frequent occurrence; yet parent and child differed in the conclusions drawn from the actions of the lover: and no wonder. Acquainted with the schoolmaster's abstracted and peculiar habits, young Huntley was less careful before him than before Grace. Now, a mother would have had sufficient skill, had she perceived his evil propensities, to draw them forth palpably in the presence of her daughter; well knowing that railing at faults whose existence is not credited is the sure way to confirm affection in a youthful bosom — the generous mind being always roused at the bare idea of injustice. But worthy Abel Darley had no notion of such management; he satisfied his conscience by frequent allusions to Joseph's faults, and then, imagining he had been too severe, would, in nearly the same breath, lavish praises on his virtues.

As the lover entered the schoolmaster's cottage, it was impossible not to admire his manly form and excellent carriage. Considerably above the middle height, his head well placed, and his finely-developed features set off to every possible advantage by a scrupulous attention to neat and even gentlemanly attire, Joseph Huntley might well have been pronounced the handsomest youth in the village of Craythorpe. When he took off his hat, however, there was invariably mingled with admiration a feeling for which it was difficult to account. Those skilled in physiognomy would have observed that his forehead was too low, and that a peculiar contraction of the brows denoted the vicinity of stormy passions; the mouth was mean in expression, but as it usually extended into a smile, discovering even and beautiful teeth, the defect escaped general notice; and Joseph Huntley was accounted, as I have said, the handsomest youth in the retired village of Craythorpe. What he was in reality, actions will tell better than words; but my readers must permit me to remind them that, in books as well as in actual life, it takes time for character to unfold itself.

About fifteen months after Abel Darley had complained of Joseph Huntley's bad workmanship and careless habits, his zeal for his daughter's happiness triumphed over his fears, and he gave all that he valued upon earth into the keeping of one she loved, "not wisely, but too well."

The father shuddered involuntarily, and turned pale, as he presented her hand to the gay bridegroom; and all present were dismayed by an oversight of the sexton, who opened the prayer-book at the funeral, instead of at the wedding, service. The clergyman had absolutely read the first words before the error was discovered. Old women grouped in the churchyard to talk over the unluckily omen; and the bride's companions blessed her with a tearful earnestness, rarely to be seen among the youthful at a rustic wedding.

Alas, for the loneliness of the father's hearth, when it is deserted by a beloved, an only child! Often did Abel Darley lift his eyes from the Bible, whereon (perhaps for the first time since his fire-side was first left desolate) he looked without receiving instruction — often did he raise them from the sacred page, and gaze upon the long candle, wondering why it waxed dim — and then, remembering that the hand which trimmed it was away, and another's, sigh heavily, and pore again over the book, without, however, brightening the light, or calling to the little serving-maiden to do so for him; — then, when the clock chimed ten, he read aloud as usual the evening prayer, and commenced the simple hymn that consecrates the name of Ken more than the mitre which crowned his brows. He had taught Grace, when a child, to sing with him, alternately, a verse of this gentle strain; and when he finished the line —

"Beneath thine own almighty wings,"

he paused for a few moments, expecting to hear her voice, so low, so soft,

so like the murmuring music of a young bird's warblings before it knows its own powers of song; then, as if the truth came suddenly upon him, that her melody had gone to delight another's dwelling, the old man burst into a flood of tears, and, covering his face with his hands, wept long and bitterly, even to the solitary hour of one, when, like a troubled child, he retired to his bed, and sobbed and slumbered until morn.

"Grace, what are you in such a bustle about?" inquired her husband, as she busied herself with more than usual diligence to set all things in order in their clean and cheerful-looking cottage.

Grace silently pointed to the watch that hung over the chimney-piece.

"Well," replied he, "and what then? I see it is rather late; but this is Sunday, and we who work must have a holyday sometimes."

"And so we should, Joseph. But do you not hear—"

"What?"

"The church-bell."

"Well?"

"Come then, dearest, and make haste, or we shall be late, and that will not be right."

"Then, I suppose, it will be wrong. But I do not think I shall go to church to-day."

"My dear, are you ill?" inquired his wife, looking affectionately in his face.

"Never was better; but I do n't feel inclined—is that so very extraordinary?"

"Oh, Joseph! you will surely not stay from church!—what would the clergyman think?—what would my father say? You will not suffer me to walk all through the lanes by myself, dear Joseph!"

"But you are not obliged to go. It is very proper to attend church; but to tramp such a distance through all weathers!—why it rained almost the whole night!"

"It is beautiful now; the air is so clear, and the birds are singing so gayly! Oh, do come!"

"I will not, so do not tease me; I must take a long walk after dinner."

"Dear Joseph," she continued, kissing him, though her eyes were filled with tears, "and must I indeed go by myself?"

"If you go, you must, most certainly," he replied, returning her caress at the same time with all his usual affection.

It was the first solitary walk she had taken during the last seven months—since her marriage, in fact; and she thought that, considering her situation, it was rather unkind of Joseph to permit her to go alone.

Almost every tree—certainly every stile she passed—was hallowed by some remembrance connected with the playmate of her childhood—the lover of her early youth—the husband of her affections. When she looked on the dew dancing amid the delicate tracery of the field-spider's web—when the joyous whistle of the gay blackbird broke upon her ear—gazing silently on all that was really fresh and beautiful in nature—she felt that, instead of warming, it fell chilly upon her heart. And yet all was as usual—the bright sun, and the smiling landscape. Why, then, was she less cheerful? She was alone! No one she loved was by her side, to whom to say, "How beautiful!"

The knowledge, the painful knowledge, which this, and a few other similar circumstances, conveyed to Grace, as to the real state of her husband's religious sentiments, made her a wiser but a sadder woman. Conscious that he had deceived her in one instance, she dreaded to ask her-

self if the deception extended also to minor matters. He no longer deemed it necessary to keep up even appearances, and not unfrequently jested at the simplicity of his wife's once believing him "a saint;" although, when she first became a mother, he seemed pleased and amused with the infant, and either was, or affected to be, touched by the earnest prayers and supplications she poured forth, that the child might be blessed, and become worthy of the name and calling of a Christian.

Had Grace made a parade of her feelings, her husband, judging from his own, might have doubted their sincerity; but he only heard them when she thought him hushed in sleep. At the midnight watch, when she trimmed her lamp, and looked into the peaceful face of her little one, so tranquil in its slumbers, then her prayers were not loud, but deep; for a tender mother's hopes, as she gazes on her child, are ever mingled with fears—which nothing can dispel, except a true and perfect trustfulness in the all-watchful care of a benevolent God. It may be that, as with the woman in Scripture, her first entreaties have been unanswered. Yet is she not weary; her voice neither falters nor fails; the heart is still petitioning, and the pious mother's prayer floats upwards—on, on, from sphere to sphere—until it reaches the throne of the Great Omnipotent, whose dearest attribute is mercy!

I have said that his wife's maternal tenderness affected a heart which every-day occurrences continued to steep more deeply in hardness and sin; for the progress from idleness to comparative want, from want to vice, whether slow or not, is sure; and even a disinclination to employment, where there is nothing but industry to look to for support, is in itself a crime that heralds the approach of others more consuming. So that, when the momentary excitement to good feeling was past, Joseph Huntley relaxed into a cold indifference toward those whom it was his duty to cherish.

The rapidity with which love may glide from the heart of man is a moral phenomenon for which it would puzzle philosophers to account. The brief space of a few months not unfrequently converts the devoted into the unkind, or—to a delicate mind still worse—the neglectful husband. Grace knew that Joseph's circumstances, when they married, were prosperous; but very soon after she was made a wife a change came over all things—gradually it came, as a small cloud increases to an overwhelming tempest. In his business young Huntley might have been distinguished; but the orders he received were slighted for the boon companions of the village ale-house; and debts accumulated, which there was no money to pay.

"What sort of bread do you call this?" inquired Joseph, somewhat sulkily, of her who had prepared a homely cake, and baked it over the ashes, for his supper.

"It is nice wholesome food, Joseph, for I made it myself. You used to like my cakes."

"But the flour is coarse."

Grace did not reply.

"Did you hear me say the flour is coarse?"

"It is not as fine as usual, for I brought it from my father's—he gave me some; and—and—"

"And what, Grace?—women are seldom slow of speech."

"The baker, love, has asked so often for his bill, that, as you told me I should have money to-morrow to pay him, I did not like to get anything more till then."

"Tell him to-morrow that I cannot pay him for a month; and manage, at the same time, to have properly boulted flour to make your cakes. This eats like saw-dust."

"My dear, dear Joseph! I really cannot put the man off. I promised faithfully as you told me. I will work night and day, Joseph—I will do anything you desire; but do not make me the instrument of falsehood—indeed, indeed it will break my heart!"

Her husband looked for a moment into her face; but his countenance expressed no sympathy with her honest feelings.

"Grace, you are a fool! What does a little longer credit signify to such a man as Mealbag? Or—hark ye, Grace—what does it matter if, like my betters, I, one of these days, give leg-bail for my debts, or sleep three months in a well-guarded house, commonly called a jail?"

The colour faded from the young woman's countenance as she returned her husband's gaze; another moment, and the warm red blood rushed back to her cheek, and her fine eyes brightened with an expression that his could not encounter.

"What!" she exclaimed, vehemently, "turn rogue, Joseph!—be pointed at as a dishonest tradesman!—cheat those who labour for their food! If anything has occurred, not brought on by your own carelessness—do not frown, I did not mean *that*—if anything has happened, no matter how it has been brought on, to prevent your paying, and that soon, take all—take everything—the bed from under us—the gown I wear—all, all I have in the world;—sell, and pay—pay to the last farthing. I can work! Oh, yes! I could beg—starve!—but I could not bear any one to call you rogue!—or our child, Joseph—our dear, dear child—a dishonest man's son!" She clasped her boy to her bosom; and then, again looking on her husband, threw herself into his arms, and pressing her cheek, moist with tears, to his, murmured. "But you *did* not mean it, Joseph—you *could* not mean it—you never could mean *that*! You only said it to tease, to try me; but it was very cruel of you! Just say you did not mean it."

"What a fuss about a simple word! Why, girl, you are more silly than I took you for! Mean it!—no, no! But, Grace, you need not have turned so suddenly on me, even if I *did* mean it. I have heard of women who would bear much more for their husband's good than that."

"For your good, Joseph!" she replied passionately: "Oh, yes! for your good I would bear anything; but it could never be for your good to have your name joined by dishonesty to dishonour. Say you did not mean it, and I will believe you—but just say it again, Joseph—just once more! Thank you. And now," she added, drawing a heavy breath, and rising from his bosom, my heart is lighter—and—may I go on?"

"Yes."

"You will pay the baker to-morrow?"

"I cannot. The money I intended for him I have been obliged to give elsewhere."

"What, to the man who sold you the mahogany?"

"Yes, and for other little matters: so, dear, you must put off the baker, you see.—Why, my little Abel cannot eat this bread!—One of your sweet smiles will put him off;—or else you must borrow the money from your father."

"I cannot do either," she replied, shaking her head mournfully. "I promised the baker; and my poor father has no money, except a small sum laid by to purchase a new great-coat and some flannel, for winter: perhaps you could not repay him before that season came. But, Joseph, listen—my silk cloak—what do I want with such finery? The glazier's wife said she would give two pounds for a cloak of the kind; so let her have it. I hope you will like me as well in a tenpenny print, particularly when you see that I have kept my word."

There is something so commanding, so holy, in virtue, that, though the

wicked may not imitate, they cannot withhold from it their admiration. As Huntley looked upon his wife, he thought she had never appeared so lovely. Some of the affection of earlier and purer years returned warmly to his heart; and, as he kissed her, words of happier import broke from his lips—"God bless you, Grace! I am a sad scoundrel, and that 's the truth."

"Years rolled into eternity;" the million, indeed, heeded not their passing, but Grace Huntley had recorded them with tears. Meanwhile her husband sunk deeper and deeper in vice; yet the misery that followed schooled her still more in the ways of virtue. "They are bitter," she would say, "but perhaps they are useful lessons." It was sad indeed to know that the hearts which once were united had severed--and severed--and severed, until, as with the rich man and Lazarus in the parable, "there was a great gulf" between them. At first distrust, next coldness, then reproaches, ended in--but no! they did not hate each other; she could not hate him who had received her early and only love--the man to whom, at God's altar, she had sworn duty and affection. The heart she had trusted she would have given worlds to recall to virtue; and the voice which now seldom spoke but to blaspheme--how she prayed that it might again be restored to the music of former years--the harmony of kindness and sweet communion! She could not hate him; and he, base and hardened as he was, could not hate her.

In less than eight years after their marriage, her little family were entirely dependent upon her for support. The workshop, filled with implements and materials for labour, had passed into other hands; and the pretty cottage, with its little flower-garden, was tenanted by a more industrious master. For months together, Joseph used to absent himself from home, under the pretext of seeking employment. So ruined was his reputation, that no one in his own neighbourhood would intrust him with work; and he was but too willing to follow the wandering bent of his disordered mind. How he was really occupied during these excursions was a profound secret even to his wife. Sometimes he returned well dressed and with plenty of money, which he would lavish foolishly, in sudden fits of affection, upon his children. On other occasions, he appeared with hardly sufficient clothes to cover him--poor, and suffering bodily and mental misery. Then, when from her earnings he was provided and fed, he would again go forth, and neither be seen nor heard of for many months.

When chid by her neighbours for the kindness with which she treated this reckless spendthrift, she would reply calmly, "He is my husband--the father of my children; and, as such, can I see him want?"

From the very day that she parted with her first portion of dress, to pay the baker's bill, she had toiled unceasingly with her own hands for the benefit of her family. Mrs. Craddock could no longer say that she was unskilled in woman's craft; to the astonishment of all, in a little time she was the most exquisite needlewoman in the neighbourhood. Nothing came amiss in the way of labour. Long before daylight she was busied with her housewifery--the earliest smoke of the village was from the chimney of her neat, though plain and scantily furnished, cottage; and so punctual was she in her engagements, that "As true as Grace Huntley" became a proverb in Craythorpe. Humble yet exalted distinction!--one that all desire--so few deserve!

With increasing years, the mind of Abel Darley became more and more absent; nevertheless, though decidedly opposed to all modern innovations, (whenever, indeed, he could be made to consider the import of such things,) he still continued to perform his duty of instructing his pupils on the approved old plan--that is to say, with a birch rod in the right hand, and a lesson-book in the left. Yet was the schoolmaster not prone to chastisement, retaining the birch rather as an emblem of authority than for use.

He had a ferule for big boys, — a fool's-cap for little ones; and lavished even more, if possible, than the indulgence usually bestowed by grand-papas on their grandchildren, upon "the child Abel," as he was wont to call his daughter's eldest son, who greatly resembled his father, not only in person, but in mind. The anxiety this resemblance caused his mother may be better imagined than described. The small cottage, which, when Abel was about twelve years old, sufficed for her dwelling, was nearly at the corner of the village churchyard, and about ten minutes' walk from her father's school-house. A small, green lane, that skirted the village, led by her door; and it was pleasant to see the merry, light-hearted boys, full of childish glee, passing along that shady path.

Her second son was a delicate and sickly child; but her girl — her Josephine, as she was named at her father's request, was the miniature resemblance of the still beautiful mother. Often had she watched, till her eyes became dim, and her heart swelled almost to bursting within her bosom, as her eldest-born led his little sister by the hand on his return from school — now chasing, to give her pleasure, the gay butterfly — then hanging from the branches of the sweet hawthorn or golden laburnum that fringed the road, to gather for her the earliest and sweetest flowers. "They are so like us!" she would think, — "so like what we were! How well I can remember his father at his age, when first he came to the school, and used to watch over and play with me, as Abel does with Josephine!"

The increasing wilfulness and restlessness of young Abel's disposition were an additional cause of sorrow to his anxious mother. If anything could reconcile her to her husband's absence, it was the consciousness that, were he living with them, his bad example would operate but too powerfully on their eldest son. Yet one better skilled in the ways of the world, and the rules of modern education, might have envied Grace Huntley the skill she manifested in the management of her children.

"Had his mother so tutored her son, Joseph Huntley would have been a different sort of person," said the parish rector, Mr. Glasscott, one Sunday evening to his wife, after young Abel had undergone a long examination, not only in the Church Catechism, but on the great leading doctrines of Christianity.

"True, my dear," replied his lady; "but there are few mothers like Grace Huntley, teaching and practising industry in the most wonderful manner — I may say, disdaining assistance; for I have thought that her lip curled with even more pride than befitted a Christian, when Lady Purseful offered her a dole of meal and money last Christmas."

"It was independence, not pride. They are, in effect, so like each other, that the world confounds them; but in reality they are very different. Grace Huntley is a Christian, and a high-minded woman, whose lot has been cast in low places, whose spirit has struggled nobly through adversity — subdued, but not broken, by the trials she has encountered."

"It is very long since her husband has been seen in the neighbourhood."

"So much the better; yet I have heard his poor wife declare that it would cost her less pain to close his eyes, and perform the offices which the dead claim of the living, than to remain in the dreadful uncertainty that rankles in her heart like a rusted dagger."

"Poor woman! Has he not been suspected of crimes that the law might take hold of?"

"He has. I trust he may never be brought before me on any charge of the kind: for her sake, I should feel much grieved at performing a magistrate's duty."

On the same evening, Grace Huntley was sitting in the seat she had occupied in her father's cottage years before; and such were the school-master's abstracted habits, that it is very doubtful whether the events which had changed the lofty but cheerful girl into the reserved, and, it might be, cold-mannered woman, had been at all noted by him.

He wondered much why Joseph left his family; although, he observed, with his usual simplicity, he never expected to have seen in him a careful husband; but Grace was so patient, so uncomplaining, that he believed her to be happy, and was satisfied.

"You are not going yet, my child?" said the old man, checking her affectionately as she rose to depart.

"I must go, father; the children, you know, are alone."

"Poor things! — you ought to have brought them with you. Ah, Grace! it is very cruel of you not to come and live entirely here — it would be so much better than moping alone."

Grace smiled sorrowfully. "If I had not a home, where he could be entirely master, to receive him, you know, father, he would never return."

"And no great matter."

"Father, for shame! — he is my husband!"

"My dear child, I beg your pardon — I forgot! You are not angry?"

"No, my dear father! But it was of Abel I wished to speak — he is now twelve years old. I cannot afford, on the probability of his turning out a genius, to keep him in indolence; and Mr. Greythorpe's gardener has offered to take him in spring to —"

"Take the infant from his lessons in spring!" interrupted the old man: "Why, Grace, you are not of the sound judgment you were in former times, or you would never dream of such a thing. The boy is a prodigy — there is nothing he cannot learn. I do not despair — we must never despair — of giving him such knowledge as may, in a few years, fit him, mayhap, for a college gown. Grace, Grace! you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, if you take the child from his studies. I watch for his step — I love his voice — I feel my own youth renewed when I look upon him. You must let him 'bide with his books until his fifteenth year, at all events; and then, if he has not accomplished wonders, make him, if you will, a hewer of wood or a drawer of water; — but you would not take from me the hope and comfort of my old age, Grace!"

"Father, believe me! Abel has no taste for books; they may constitute his pastime, but will never be his business; actual labour is the only thing for a mind like his. I cannot afford to apprentice him to a reputable trade, so let him be a husbandman — he is fond of flowers, and takes delight in curious plants: it is an innocent and sweet thing to live as a gardener, among the testimonies of God's goodness; it will employ his mind and soften his heart. I have seldom heard of one who spent his life in the pure fields, occupied in training the works of nature to perfection, who was either mean or wicked."

"It is a gentle calling, doubtless; but there are higher ones; and the 'candle,' saith the Holy Scriptures, 'must not be hid under a bushel.'"

"Well, well, sir, it is not yet spring; only, my dear father, do not let him idle when he is here; there is no peace, no honour, no prosperity, for the slothful."

"I will — I will make him industrious; he shall do six sums to-morrow in fractions, and repeat the multiplication-table as far as nine times, out of class, twice; moreover, he shall read the eighth and ninth chapters of Roman history, with questions, and write —"

"A parcel of idle ballads on the back of his exercises," interrupted poor Grace, taking up a scrawled and blotted copy-book, and smiling at the list of employments her father marked out for her son.

"No," replied the schoolmaster, resolutely, "no; albeit poetry, such as Milton's, softens and elevates the mind. He shall write one copy in text, and one in small-caps, and do two exercises; so that will be sufficient occupation for one day to satisfy you, Grace; — though, methinks, you might leave me to decide the quantity as well as quality of his studies."

"You are not offended with me, father?"

"Ah, no, Grace! you never, my child, gave me reason to be angry in your life; yet, when I look at you now — it is very strange — my heart grows heavy — not light. There, tie your cloak firmly, my own child; and God bless you! But, as you hope to lay your dying head on a peaceful pillow, do not send the lad away. I will make him work — indeed I will, Grace. Your mother went first; then you deserted your father's hearth; but the child Abel! — do not bereave me of him, Grace — do not leave me to say, like Jacob of old, 'If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved!'"

Grace affectionately kissed her father; and, in a few minutes her hand was upon the latch of her own cottage-door. Ere she had crossed the threshold, a voice, whose tones could not be mistaken, thrilled to her heart. It was that of her husband! He was standing before the fire, holding his hands over the flame; his figure seemed more muscular than ever, but its fine proportions were lost in the appearance of increased and (if the term may be used) of coarse strength. His hair hung loosely over his brows, so as to convey the idea of habitual carelessness; and his tattered garments bespoke the extreme of poverty. He turned slowly round, as the exclamation of "Mother, dear mother!" burst from the lips of Josephine, who had been gazing from a corner at her father, more than half afraid to approach him.

One look — and one only, was enough to stifle all reproach, and stir up all the affection of Grace's heart. Want was palpably stamped upon his countenance; and, as her eye glanced rapidly over his figure, she shuddered at the alteration which a few months had accomplished. For some moments neither spoke; at last, he advanced and held out his hand to her: as he walked, she perceived that his feet were shoeless and bleeding. All his faults, all his cruelties, were forgotten — she only remembered that he suffered, and was her husband; and she fell upon his bosom and wept bitterly.

Whatever were the sins of Joseph Huntley, either before or after this period of his life, it is but justice to him to believe, that the tears he that night mingled with his wife's were those of a contrite heart. When she asked him how and where he had spent his time during the past months, he entreated her to forbear such questions for a little while, and that then he would satisfy her: but the period never came; and the dislike he evinced to afford her any information on the subject, together with his speedy relapse into intemperance and dissolute habits, checked her inquiries, and renewed her fears for the future well-doing of her eldest son.

In the vicinity of gentlemen's seats there are always a proportionate number of poachers; and it requires more than magisterial vigilance to restrain their devastations. Although it was impossible to fix a stigma of this kind on any particular person in the village of Craythorpe, there were two men, basket-makers by trade, who were strongly suspected of such practices. John and Sandy Smith lived together in a wretched hut on the skirts of Craythorpe Common. No one knew whence they came. Lonely and reserved in their habits, they seldom mingled with the villagers. Little children loved not their approach; and the large Newfoundland dog, at "The Swinging Hen," would never form acquaintance with them or their mongrel lurcher: the latter, to confess the truth, was as reserved as his masters, and made but few friendly overtures towards the nobler animal.

The only thing connected with the strangers that made a respectable appearance was a fleet and firm-footed black pony, which they maintained and treated with great care, for the ostensible purpose of hawking their brooms through the country; but people did talk; and, indeed, it was difficult to account for various petty peculations that had occurred; or how the landlord of the same "Swinging Hen" obtained his exquisite French brandy. Grace learned with regret that an acquaintance had commenced, and quickly ripened into intimacy, between her husband and these men. Joseph was no sooner clothed, and reinstated in his humble cottage, than his bad habits returned, and his evil propensities grew stronger and stronger.

Yet the ill temper so constantly manifested towards his wife and younger children was never extended to his eldest boy, who, happy in the removal of all restraint, and heedless of the misery his conduct inflicted on his aged grandfather, flung aside his books, and, careless of his mother's injunctions, appealed to a higher power when he was reprov'd for his frequently repeated faults. He galloped on the Smiths' pony, and made friends with their dog Covey; began by shooting sparrows and titmice with bow and arrows, and ended by bringing home a hare as a present to his mother, which she resolutely refused to dress, notwithstanding the entreaties of the son and the commands of his father.

"Did you see, or take any silver away from hence?" inquired Grace, who had been anxiously occupied in looking over her small chest of drawers.

"How could we get at the drawer, mother?" replied Abel quickly; but reddening at the same time.

"Oh, Abel!" exclaimed Josephine.

"If you have taken the money, tell the truth," enjoined his mother, in her clear quiet voice.

Abel made a sign of silence to his little sister. "Why should I take it?" he said, sullenly, at last.

"Abel, Abel!" screamed Josephine, attempting to put her hand on his mouth at the same time, "God will hate you if you lie! I saw you take the money — all mother's white shillings; but I thought she bid you do so."

Grace turned slowly round from the table: her face was of an unearthly paleness: no word — no sound passed from between her parted lips; but she stood, like the cold fixed statue of Despair, gazing upon her children. Josephine rose, and, climbing on the table, endeavoured to win her mother's attention. Gerald, the sickly brother, getting up from his chair, clasped and kissed her hand. With Abel, there was a struggle — not of long duration, but nevertheless powerful — the struggle of bad habit with good principle; the latter conquered, and he fell at his mother's feet.

"Forgive me — forgive me! God knows I am sorry. It was not for myself I took it — father told —"

"Hush!" interrupted Grace, "do not say *that* before *these*" — and she pointed to the children; adding, with great presence of mind, "It was your father's money, if it was mine, Abel; but you were wrong in not telling me of it. There, Josephine and Gerald, go out into the lane, if you will; I wish to speak to your brother."

With almost inconceivable agony, this excellent woman learned that her son was far gone in falsehood. His heart was opened by the sight of his mother's distress; and it takes time to make a practised deceiver. With the earnestness of truth, he poured forth the wicked knowledge he had

acquired ; and Grace shuddered, while she prayed that the Almighty would watch over her son in this sore and dangerous extremity.

And now came one of her bitterest trials. She had guarded Abel from the effects of his father's sin, as an angel watches over the destinies of a beloved object, — unceasingly, but unseen. She had never alluded to her husband's faults, nor even to his unkindness, before her children ; yet now the time had arrived when she must rend the veil — she must expose his shame : and to whom ? — To his own son ! Now it became her duty, her painful but imperative duty, to caution Abel openly against his own father — against his influences and habits ; and to show the child that the parent was guiding him in the way that leadeth to destruction.

If anything like justice has been done to the development of Grace Huntley's character, this sacrifice will be appreciated. How many a deed of unostentatious but devoted virtue is performed beneath a peasant's roof — amid the lanes and alleys of humble life, unknown to, or unheeded by, the world !

Huntley soon discovered that his wife had been influencing their child's conduct : indeed, the sacred law of truth formed so completely the basis of her words and actions, that she did not attempt for a moment to conceal it.

"Then you mean to set yourself in opposition to me !" he said, all evil passions gathering at his heart and storming on his brow.

"Not to you, but to your sins, Joseph," was her meek but firm reply : whereupon he swore a deep and bitter oath, that he would bring up his own child in the way which best suited him ; and dared her interference.

"As sure as you are a living woman," he continued — with that concentrated rage which is a thousand times more dangerous than impetuous fury — "as sure as you are a living woman, you shall repent of this ! I see the way to punish your wilfulness : if you oppose me in the management of my children, one by one they shall be taken from you to serve my purposes ! You may look for them in vain ; until (he added, with a fiendish smile) you read their names in the columns of the *Newgate Calendar*."

That night, as latterly had been his custom, he sallied forth about eight o'clock, leaving his home and family without food or money. The children crowded round their mother's knee to repeat their simple prayers, and retired, cold and hungry, to bed. It was near midnight ere her task was finished ; and then she stole softly into her chamber, having first looked upon and blessed her treasures. Her sleep was of that restless heavy kind which yields no refreshment ; once she was awakened by hearing her husband shut the cottage door ; again she slept, but started from a horrid dream — or was it, indeed, reality — and had her husband and her son Abel quitted the dwelling together ? She sprang from her bed, and felt on the pallet — Gerald was there ; again she felt — she called — she passed into the next room — "Abel, Abel, my child ! as you value your mother's blessing, speak !" There was no reply. A dizzy sickness almost overpowered her senses. Was her husband's horrid threat indeed fulfilled — and had he so soon taken their child as his participator in unequivocal sin ! She opened the door, and looked out upon the night : it was cold and misty, and her sight could not penetrate the gloom. The chill fog rested upon her face like the damps of the grave. She attempted to call again upon her son, but her powers of utterance were palsied — her tongue quivered — her lips separated, yet there came forth no voice, no sound to break the silence of oppressed nature ; her eyes moved mechanically towards the heavens — they were dark as the earth : — had God deserted her ? — would he deny one ray, one little ray of light, to lead her to her child ? Why did the moon cease to shine, and the stars withhold their brightness ? Should she never again behold her boy — her first-born ? Her heart swelled and beat within

her bosom. She shivered with intense agony, and leaned her throbbing brow against the door-post, to which she had clung for support. Her husband's words rang in her ears — "One by one shall your children be taken from you to serve my purposes!" Through the dense fog she fancied that he glared upon her in bitter hatred — his deep-set eyes flashing with demoniac fire, and his smile now extending, now contracting, into all the varied expressions of triumphant malignity. She pressed her hand on her eyes to shut out the horrid vision; and a prayer, a simple prayer, rose to her lips: like oil upon the troubled waters, it soothed and composed her spirit. She could not arrange or even remember a form of words: but she repeated, again and again, the emphatic appeal, "Lord, save me; I perish!" until she felt sufficient strength to enable her to look again into the night. As if hope had set its beacon in the sky, calmly and brightly the moon was now shining upon her cottage. With the sudden change, at once the curse and blessing of our climate, a sharp east wind had set in, and was rolling the mist from the canopy of heaven; numerous stars were visible where, but five minutes before, all had been darkness and gloom. The shadow passed from her soul — she gazed steadily upwards — her mind regained its firmness — her resolve was taken. She returned to her bed-room — dressed — and, wrapping her cloak closely to her bosom, was quickly on her way to the Smiths' dwelling, on Craythorpe common.

The solitary hut was more than two miles from the village; the path leading to it broken and interrupted by fragments of rocks, roots of furze, and stubbed underwood, and, at one particular point, intersected by a deep and brawling brook. Soon after Grace had crossed this stream, she came in view of the cottage, looking like a misshapen mound of earth; and, upon peering in at the window, which was only partially lined by a broken shutter, Covey, the lurcher, uttered, from the inside, a sharp muttering bark, something between reproof and recognition. There had, certainly, been a good fire, not long before, on the capacious hearth, for the burning ashes cast a lurid light upon an old table and two or three dilapidated chairs; there was also a fowling-piece lying across the table; but it was evident none of the inmates were at home; and Grace walked slowly, yet disappointedly, round the dwelling, till she came to the other side, that rested against a huge mass of mingled rock and clay, overgrown with long tangled fern and heather: she climbed to the top, and had not been many minutes on the look-out ere she perceived three men rapidly approaching from the opposite path. As they drew nearer, she saw that one of them was her husband; but where was her son? Silently she lay among the heather, fearing she knew not what — yet knowing she had much to fear. The chimney that rose from the sheeling had, she thought, effectually concealed her from their view; but in this she was mistaken — for while Huntley and one of the Smiths entered the abode, the other climbed up the mound. She saw his hat within a foot of where she rested, and fancied she could feel his breath upon her cheek, as she crouched, like a frightened hare, more closely in her form; however, he surveyed the spot without ascending farther, and then retreated, muttering something about cormorants and ravens; and, almost instantly, she heard the door of the hut close. Cautiously she crept down from her hiding-place; and, crawling along the ground with stealth and silence, knelt before the little window, so as to observe, through the broken shutter, the occupation of the inmates. The dog alone was conscious of her approach; but the men were too seriously engaged to heed his intimations of danger.

Merciful powers! — had Grace Huntley suffered so long, so patiently, only to witness such a scene! She almost wished that God, in his mercy, had stricken her with blindness; she prayed for insensibility — for death — for anything save the knowledge now imparted with such fearful truth.

Would that it were a dream! But no—the horrid proofs were before her eyes—in her ears; and the one drop of comfort, the only one, was the information that her son had returned home by a shorter path—that the ruffians feared yet (oh, the import, the dreadful import, that little word carried with it!)—that they feared yet to trust him with all their secrets: they feared to bring him yet to their den.

“Then there is hope for my poor child,” she thought, “and I can—I will save him!” With this resolve, she stole away as softly and as quickly as her trembling limbs would permit. The depredators revelled in their fancied security. The old creaking table groaned under the weight of pheasant, hare, and ardent spirits; and the chorus of a wild drinking-song broke upon her ear as returning strength enabled her to hasten along the rude path leading to Craythorpe.

The first gray uncertain light of morning was visible through the old church-yard trees, as she came within sight of her cottage. She entered quietly, and saw that Abel had not only returned, but was sleeping soundly by his brother's side.

Grace set her house in order—took the work she had finished to her employer—came back, and prepared breakfast, of which her husband, having by this time also returned, partook. Now he was neither the tyrant whose threat still rung in her ears, nor the reckless bravo of the common; he appeared that morning, at least so his wife fancied, more like the being she had loved so fondly and so long.

“I will sleep, Grace,” he said, when their meal was finished—“I will sleep for an hour; and to-morrow we shall have a better breakfast.” He called his son into the bed-room, where a few words passed between them. Immediately after, Grace went into the little chamber to fetch her bonnet. She would not trust herself to look upon the sleeper; but her lips moved as if in prayer; and even her children still remembered that, as she passed out of the cottage-door, she had a flushed and agitated appearance.

“Good morning, Mrs. Huntley,” said her old neighbour, Mrs. Craddock. “Have you heard the news? Ah! these are sad times—bad people going—”

“True, true!” replied poor Grace, as she hurried onwards, “I know—I heard it all—”

Mrs. Craddock looked after her, much surprised at her abruptness.

“I was coming down to you, Grace,” said her father, standing so as to arrest her progress; “I wished to see if there was any chance of the child Abel's returning to his exercises; as this is a holyday, I thought—”

“Come with me,” interrupted Grace, “come with me, father; and we will make a rare holyday.”

She hurried the feeble old man along the road leading to the rectory, but returned no answer to his inquiries. The servant told her, when she arrived at her destination, that his master was engaged—particularly engaged—could not be disturbed—Sir Thomas Purcel was with him; and, as the man spoke, the study door opened, and Sir Thomas crossed the hall.

“Come back with me, sir!” exclaimed Grace Huntley, eagerly; “I can tell you all you want to know.”

The paronet shook off the hand she had laid upon his arm as if she were a maniac. Grace appeared to read the expression of his countenance. “I am not mad, Sir Thomas Purcel,” she continued, in a suppressed tremulous voice, “not mad, though I may be so soon. Keep back these people, and return with me. Mr. Glasscott knows I am not mad!”

She passed into the study with a resolute step, and held the door for Sir Thomas to enter; her father followed also, as a child traces its mother's footsteps, and looked around him, and at his daughter, with weak astonish-

ment. One or two of the servants, who were loitering in the hall, moved as if they would have followed.

"Back, back, I say!" she repeated, "I need no witnesses, there will be enough of them soon. Mr. Glasscott," she continued, closing the door, "hear me, while I am able to bear testimony, lest weakness—woman's weakness—overcome me, and I falter in the truth. In the broom-sellers' cottage, across the common, on the left side of the chimney, concealed by a large flat stone, is a hole—a den; there much of the property taken from Sir Thomas Purcel's last night is concealed."

"I have long suspected these men—Smith, I think they call themselves; yet they are but two. Now, we have abundant proof that *three* men absolutely entered the house——"

"There *was* a third," murmured Grace, almost inaudibly.

"Who?"

"My—my—my husband!" and, as she uttered the word, she leaned against the chimney-piece for support, and buried her face in her hands.

The clergyman groaned audibly; he had known Grace from her childhood, and felt what the declaration must have cost her. Sir Thomas Purcel was cast in a sterner mould. "We are put clearly upon the track, Mr. Glasscott," he said, "and must follow it forthwith: yet there is something most repugnant to my feelings in finding a woman thus herald her husband to destruction——"

"It was to save my children from sin," exclaimed Grace, starting forward with an energy that appalled them all: "God in heaven, whom I call to witness, knows, that though I would sooner starve than taste of the fruits of his wickedness, yet I could not betray the husband of my bosom to—to—I dare not think what! I tried—I laboured to give my offspring honest bread; I neither asked nor received charity; with my hands I laboured, and blessed the Power that enabled me to do so. If we are poor, we will be honest, was my maxim and my boast; but he—my husband, returned; he taught my boy to lie—to steal; and when I remonstrated—when I prayed, with many tears, that he would cease to train our—ay, *our* child for destruction, he mocked—scorned—told me that, one by one, I should be bereaved of my children, if I thwarted his purposes; and that I might seek in vain for them through the world, until I saw their names recorded in the book of shame! Gentlemen, this was no idle threat—last night Abel was taken from me——"

"I knew there must have been a fourth," interrupted Sir Thomas, coldly; "we must have the boy also secured."

The wretched mother, who had not imagined that any harm could result to her son, stood as if a thunderbolt had transfigured her—her hands clenched and extended—her features rigid and blanched—her frame perfectly erect, and motionless as a statue. The schoolmaster, during the whole of this scene, had been completely bewildered, until the idea of his grandchild's danger, or disappearance, he knew not which, took possession of his mind; and, filled with the single thought his faculties had the power of grasping at a time, he came forward to the table at which Mr. Glasscott was seated; and, respectfully uncovering his gray hairs, his simple countenance presenting a strong contrast to the agonized iron-bound features of his daughter, he addressed himself to the worthy magistrate:—

"I trust you will cause instant search to be made for the child Abel, whom your reverence used kindly to regard with especial favour."

He repeated this sentence at least half a dozen times, while the gentlemen were issuing orders to the persons assembled for the apprehension of the burglars, and some of the females of the family were endeavouring to restore Grace to animation. At last, Sir Thomas Purcel turned suddenly

round upon Abel Darley, and, in his stentorian tone, bawled out, "And who are you?"

"The schoolmaster of Craythorpe, so please you, sir — that young woman's father — and one whose heart is broken!"

So saying, he burst into tears; and his wail was very sad, like that of an afflicted child. Presently there was a stir among the little crowd — a murmur — and then two officers ushered Joseph Huntley and his son into the apartment.

He walked boldly up to the magistrate's table, and placed his hand upon it, before he perceived his wife, to whom consciousness had not yet returned. The moment he beheld her, he started back, saying, "Whatever charge you may have against me, gentlemen, you can have none against that woman."

"Nor have we," replied Sir Thomas; "she is your accuser!"

The fine features of Joseph Huntley relaxed into an expression of scorn and unbelief. "She appear against me! Not — not if I were to attempt to murder her!" he answered firmly.

"Grace!" exclaimed her father joyfully, "here is the child Abel — he is found!" — and seizing the trembling boy, with evident exultation, led him to her. The effect of this act of the poor simple-minded man was electrical — the mother instantly revived, but turned her face from her husband; and, intertwining her son in her arms, pressed him closely to her side. The clergyman proceeded to interrogate the prisoner, but he answered nothing, keeping his eyes intently fixed upon his wife and child. In the mean time, the officers of justice had been prompt in the execution of their duty: the Smiths were apprehended in the village; and the greater portion of the property stolen from Sir Thomas Purcel was found in the hut where Grace had beheld it concealed.

When the preparations were sufficiently forward to conduct the unfortunate men to prison, Joseph Huntley advanced to his wife. The scornful, as well as undaunted, expression of his countenance had changed to one of painful intensity; he took her hand within his, and pressed it to his lips, without articulating a single syllable. Slowly she moved her face, so that their eyes at last encountered in one long mournful look. Ten years of continued suffering could not have exacted a heavier tribute from Grace Huntley's beauty. No language can express the withering effects of the few hours' agony; her husband saw it, and felt, perhaps for the first time, how truly he had once been loved, and how much of happiness he had sacrificed to sin.

"'T was to save my children!" was the only sentence she uttered, or rather murmured; and it was the last coherent one she spoke for many weeks. Her fine reason seemed overwhelmed. It was a sight few could witness without tears. The old father, tending the couch of his afflicted daughter, would sit for hours by her bed-side, clasping the child Abel's hand within his, and every now and then shaking his head when her ravings were loud or violent.

* * * * *

It might be some fifteen years after these distressing events had agitated the little village of Craythorpe, that an elderly woman, of mild and cheerful aspect, sat calmly reading a large volume she supported against the railing of a noble vessel that was steering its course from the shores of "Merrie England," to some land far over sea. Two gentlemen, who were lounging on the quarter-deck arm in arm, frequently passed her. The elder one, in a peculiarly kind tone of voice, said, "You bear the voyage well, dame."

"Than God, yes, sir!"

"Ah! you will wish yourself back in old England before your are landed six weeks."

"I did not wish to leave it, sir; but my duty obliged me to do so."

The gentlemen walked on.

"Who is she?" inquired the younger.

"A very singular woman. Her information transported for life a husband whom she loved notwithstanding his coldness and his crimes. She had, at that time, three children, and the eldest had already become contaminated by his father's example. She saw nothing but destruction for them in prospective, her warnings and entreaties being alike unregarded; so she made her election — sacrificed the husband, and saved the children!"

"But what does she here?"

"Her eldest son is now established in a small business, and respected by all who know him; her second boy, and a father whom her misfortunes reduced to a deplorable state of wretchedness, are dead; her daughter, a village belle and beauty, is married to my father's handsome new parish-cloek; and Mrs. Huntley having seen her children provided for, and by her virtues and industry made respectable in the Old World, is now on her voyage to the New, to see, if I may be permitted to use her own simple language, 'whether she can contribute to render the last days of her husband as happy as the first they passed together.' It is only justice to the criminal to say, that I believe him truly and perfectly reformed."

"And on this chance she leaves her children and her country?"

"She does! She argues that, as the will of Providence prevented her from discharging her duties *together*, she must endeavour to perform them *separately*. He was sentenced to die; but, by my father's exertions, his sentence was commuted to one of transportation for life; and I know she has quitted England without the hope of again beholding its white cliffs."

THE MOTHER.

THE TRIALS OF LADY ELIZABETH MONTAGUE

"I had rather had eleven sons die nobly for their country, than one voluptuously surfeit out of action."

—————"There is no man in the world
More bound to his mother; yet here he lets me prate,
Like one in the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
Shew'd thy dear mother any courtesy."

CORIOLANUS.

I NEVER but once saw the Lady Elizabeth angry; and then it appeared but a slight thing which excited her displeasure. She had been called to London on some business of moment, and the housekeeper took advantage of the opportunity to dust and arrange the favourite sitting-room. The crimson velvet curtains were withdrawn from their golden bands, and the rich carpet, that had imbedded in its luxuriance many a silk-clad foot, was subjected to the rude brushes of two experienced housemaids. Nor was this all—the pictures were taken down; and not a few spider's-webs dislodged from the gilt cornice and the curious carvings of the frame-work that encircled the apartment. In replacing the pictures, the housekeeper unfortunately displaced two miniatures, which had hung the one over the other; they were portraits, and so alike in age, features, colour, size, that it required a quick memory to call to mind that one of them had worn powder: I have since learned, that the frame of the "powdered" picture was of *pure* gold, that of the other only gilt. The one represented a gentleman of some two or three and twenty years old, of a handsome and gracious countenance, with deep blue eyes, and an expanded brow. Perhaps there might have been a more daring look portrayed in the features of the other; but it may be that my imagination conjured up this character, after hearing the history of both. They had hung, as I have said, one above the other, in a little niche, appropriated to them alone—and very pretty they looked—and so thought the housekeeper, good soul! after she had rearranged them.

"My lady will never know they have been touched," she said to me; "but, poor dear lady, I do n't think she sees the dust as clearly as she used forty years ago, when first she came here, the most beautiful bride that ever the sun shone upon—it's a great blessing to have good eyesight! and if I do n't need it, nobody does, that has so many trolloping hussies to look after.—But, as I live, here's my lady's carriage—well, if ever!—but all's right—I guess I should have got it if the miniatures had not been in their places."

And away hurried Mistress Margery Rolls, at the head of the household, to welcome home her mistress. Presently I saw the Lady Elizabeth descend the steps of her old-fashioned carriage. A footman, upon whose arm she

rested, remained uncovered as she entered the great hall. I fancied her step was feeble; yet it abated nothing of the proud dignity of her carriage — and, in another instant, her voice sounded along the gallery leading to the crimson room, as her favourite sitting-chamber was called. After exchanging a brief, but kind, salutation, with one who believes she held much of the favour of this extraordinary woman, her eye rested on the miniatures.

“Who has done this?” she inquired. “Who has presumed to do this?” The housekeeper, trembling — for it was her lady’s looks more than her words that alarmed her — confessed something touching “dust and dusting.” Lady Elizabeth heeded nothing of her confession; but, with her own hands, which vibrated with agitation to her fingers’ ends, altered the position of the miniatures, placing the one with powder above the other. She then left the apartment, and I did not see her again until the hour of dinner.

There was something so elevated and noble in all the arrangements of Montague House, that it invariably called up the visions of those days, when the baronial hospitality of England formed the theme of harp and song: the magnificent broad oaken staircase, dimly lighted by deep arched windows of coloured glass — the dense dull figures, that seemed to grimly smile from their ancient frames as you descended or ascended the polished stairs — the long intricate galleries, leading from right to left, intersected with nooks, and crossings, and passages, that could not fail to perplex — the superb hangings of the various sleeping apartments, that flashed upon you through the opening doors: some of curiously wrought green velvet patterns, on a white satin ground, which the tint of years had sobered, but not destroyed; others, of crimson, lined with yellow, the draperies folding round the pillars of some ancient bed, rich in white and gold relief — the ancient chapel, where the devotions of the noble Montagues of many a by-gone century had been strangely mingled with the pomps and vanities of this world; the knee, it is true, knelt at the altar, but the hand and eye traced the armorial bearings, in all their intricate and mysterious emblazonings, in the very place where such bravery should be all forgotten; the banner and the flag hung mouldering from the walls; and the moth found a dwelling and a feast, within the time-honoured hassocks, where royalty, if report speaks true, had often prayed; then the superb, and yet grave-looking, rooms, leading to each other, the windows opening into a park, where wood and water, hill and dale, vied to take from England its reproach of insipidity; the towering walls, hung with the arts of kingdoms; the pure, and almost imbodied, portraits of Vandyke, Lilly, Reynolds, and the gentlemanly Lawrence, and the placid landscapes of Gainsborough, all claiming attention and demanding tribute from the eye and heart; the cold but magnificent sculpture, standing out, I had almost said, in native grandeur, and rebuking, in its silent dignity, the thoughts that wander to less holy things; the library, stored to the very ceiling with books, those moral treasures of the world, that would fain teach us the sweets of wisdom without giving us to taste of the bitter waters of experience — and then the troops of venerable domestics, silent of foot and lip, attentive both with eye and ear.

The Lady Elizabeth herself — the great — the rich — the noble — or, better still, as she was emphatically called by her people — the good Lady Elizabeth, was in beautiful keeping with Montague House. At the time I tell of, she had completed her sixtieth birth-day. She was tall of stature, and what her figure wanted in roundness, was concealed by the ample folds of her black satin robe, which opened down the front, over a petticoat of the same material; — her sleeves were confined at the elbows, by *cordons* of bullion, and the lower portion was open half way up the arm, so that a full

inner sleeve of the most exquisite cambric was seen descending to the hand, where it was terminated by a frill of the richest lace; — her cap was ever of peculiar fashion; and yet, from the fact of its being so adapted to her age and countenance, it excited no observation, except in commendation of its fitness; it was something shaped like the head-dress of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, but a band of crimped crape encircled the under portion of her countenance; — her own hair, of a perfect whiteness, separated over a high but wrinkled brow, and she wore no ornament, except a chain of the finest gold, united at intervals by stars of diamonds, rivalling all I ever saw in brilliancy and quality. It was a noble sight to see that aged lady rise from the head of her table, after dealing forth hospitality to some of the greatest in the land, and sweep through troops of ancient servitors, accompanied by youth, and love, and beauty, across her marble and golden halls — the dispenser of good and of happiness to all around her.

You ask, "Was not she happy?"

She was a widow — and childless!

* * * * *

"You now know," continued Lady Elizabeth, "why I replaced the miniatures; and this manuscript will convince you that, as all is not gold that glitters, so all is not happiness that smiles. You say, you thought me the most enviable person you ever knew; — decide if such be the case, when you have read what I have written. But never look upon human nature without calling to mind a beautiful fable, the spirit of which I remember, though its words have escaped my memory. Jupiter once gave permission to a number of repining mortals to lay down their troubles, provided they agreed to bear, each, the misfortune of his neighbour: to this they joyfully consented; but, when they came to weigh and consider the nature of the new burdens, they begged that Jove would permit them to resume their own. — Lady Elizabeth Montague," continued the lady, "never intends to appear before the world as the author of her own life; but you are a professed studier of human nature — it is the book you love to read — and, if not read deeply, it is a question with me, whether it ought to be perused at all. I have written all I suffered — and much that I thought, during a long half-century. — I should have suffered less, had I not inherited, with vast possessions, the distinguishing characteristic of my race" — the old lady drew herself up with the dignity of an empress, who would use earth as a footstool — "I was proud!"

I saw that pride had indeed been her besetting sin, for there was a feeling of unquelled pride in the confession; and hardly knowing what to say, I observed, "It was the sin by which angels fell." Lady Elizabeth turned the light of her flashing eye upon me; for a moment it gleamed with unusual brightness, and a smile of mingled scorn and triumph flitted over her aristocratic features; but the flashing of her eye quenched within its own deep socket, and the smile faded, as, pressing my arm with her long thin fingers, she replied, "And the sin by which devils triumphed."

The manuscript was written in a fair Italian hand — stiff and formal; but exact and equal in its proportions. I perused it to the end with an interest which only the *real* occurrences of life can excite.

* * * * *

"I was the sole child of a proud and noble family, branches of which had intermarried, at different periods, not only into many royal continental families, but had mingled hand and blood with the Tudors, the Plantagenets, and the unfortunate house of Stuart. My mother never forgave either herself or me for that I was born a female, when an heir was so much more desired: but, my father! — my beloved father loved me for myself — and he loved me, too, because, unlike my mother, I delighted in the studies he cherished.

"My mother's pride was of the abstract and more narrow kind ; it was a small weak pride — she was charmed at being a countess, and vexed because, if her husband died, I could not be an earl ; but that was all. She had wedded my father for the distinction of a coronet, and he selected her because she was pretty, and belonged to a family which, in the time of the Tudors, had been connected with ours ; consequently, my father's honour was concerned in keeping up the dignity of his relatives. I was fashioned according to the habits of the young ladies of my time, but readily gave in to my father's love of heraldry and history.

"When I was fifteen, my mother died, and I sorrowed for her, more because England had lost a countess, than that I had been deprived of a parent. I thought it was dreadful that we should be subjected to a shroud — a pall — a coffin ! And more than once the question was debated within my own mind, whether my mother was a countess in the spirit world ; if she was not, I felt assured she would be very miserable. It must not be inferred from this, that I was ignorant of the grand points and principles of Christianity. Religion, the established religion of England, was a portion of our prerogative : the chaplain read prayers daily in our ancient and beautiful chapel, and said grace after meals, with a correctness which, in due time, entitled him to a rectory ; when another succeeded, who performed equally well the duties of his station. A young heiress of sixteen is seldom given to theological controversy ; I had every reason to be happy and satisfied with the dispensation of good — I knew of no evil — for my father had a bountiful hand and a liberal heart, and there was neither poverty nor want within our towns or villages. We passed among our people, and blessings greeted us on every side. To the poor he was ever condescending — they were his equals and his superiors who called him proud. Once only, during his life-time, I went to Court ; and though my wealth, and what was deemed my beauty, created a great sensation, and the nobles of the land vied for the heiress of Montague, yet we returned within a month to our country halls. The truth is, he was not there lord paramount, — in a Court crowded with men of equal rank, and doubtless better skilled as courtiers ; he could not exist without the homage of the lip — he missed the salutations and the deserved blessings of his tenants — and having trained me in a strange mixture of pride and usefulness, he expected that I was to be totally unmindful of the adulations and attentions which have so many charms for a young and not unhandsome woman.

"Offer after offer was rejected either by my father or myself. I liked to feel my power over hearts as well as acres ; and, I confess, I gloried not a little in my triumphs. Yet was I neither a flirt nor a coquette. I was too well principled for the former — too proud to condescend to the latter ; and, at one-and-twenty I remained in a state of single blessedness.

"On the day I came of age, my cousin, Edward Montague, arrived at Montague House. He had been abroad for many years, and we had not met since my days of childhood. It was in the carved-hall that the dance and the festa was prepared to do me honour. I sat on an elevated seat at the upper end, surrounded by six young ladies of the first families in the county, who had requested permission to act as my attendants. They were dressed in the costume of the Court of Lewis the Fourteenth, the period chosen by me as best calculated to display the gorgeous and brilliant jewels of our house. A tiara of diamonds sparkled on my brow ; my zone and armlets were of the same fashion and quality ; and tassels of the finest gold, enriched with gems, descended from the zone to my feet. Children, habited as the slaves of eastern lands, moved about the room, flinging incense from their golden censers, and presenting the most odorous flowers to our guests. From behind a curtain of thin crimson silk, at the back of the orchestra, poured forth a flood of light which enchanted every eye ; while the harpists,

and players on the most delicate instruments, appropriately dressed, appeared as if amid clouds tinted with the most delicate hues of the rainbow. It was, in truth, a gorgeous scene, and one I still love to think upon; for there, elated by the homage of hundreds of friends — (friends!?) — my father presented my cousin, Edward Montague, to my remembrance. He had passed, as I have said, many years abroad, and, I knew, had been received with flattering distinctions at almost all the European courts. His person was everywhere admired, but his learning and chivalrous honour claimed from all the highest consideration. From the moment he first entered, I felt anxious to gain his good opinion, a feeling I had never known before; for it appeared to me as if I had inherited the suffrages of all mankind. ‘And so,’ he said, ‘you are really my little cousin, Elizabeth. Lady Elizabeth — I remember, you were always too stately as a child to play; now, doubtless, you are too stately as a woman to smile.’

“‘The lady spares her smiles, in pity to her slaves,’ said one of my flatterers.

“I shall never forget the look of contempt thrown by my cousin on the speaker; I thought it perfectly uncalled for — indeed, I wondered how any one could feel displeasure in my presence. I spoke to Edward of the ladies of Italy — he praised their grace, their noble yet gentle manners; of the ladies of France — he commended their sprightliness and freedom from affectation; of the German ladies — he told of their good sense and matronly habits, of their prudence and homely virtues. Had I talked of the Esquimaux, he would have found something to approve; and yet — *he approved not me*. It was evident that he debated, within his own mind, whether my jewels or myself deserved the most admiration — his eye glanced coldly over both; and he spoke, notwithstanding the festivity, in a voice which fell sadly, yet sweetly, on my ear.

“I thought the halls and the company less and less brilliant as the evening advanced; heaviness came over all — the lights seemed dim unto mine eyes — the music tuneless to my ears. I sought, eagerly and earnestly, for his approbation, but he gave it not. I went dispirited to my chamber; and, as my maids unclasped the coronet from my brows, I remembered a text of Scripture: it was —

“‘All is vanity and vexation of spirit.’

“How often since have I proved its truth! Days and weeks passed, and Edward remained our guest, often annoying the heiress of Montague by claiming her respect — a troublesome feeling to one who demanded homage from all the world. I was seated one morning in the embrasure of one of the library windows, when Edward, accompanied by his favourite friend, Sir Frederick Monson, entered, deeply engaged in conversation. The first sentence nailed me to my seat — I had no power either to move or speak. It was the voice of Sir Frederick.

“‘I only wish Lady Elizabeth paid me half the attention she does you — I should need no farther encouragement.’

“How the blood mounted to my cheeks! my temples throbbed intensely; and I fancied they must have heard the beating of my heart.

“‘You are wrong, Sir Frederick,’ replied my cousin, ‘you are very wrong; the Lady Elizabeth regards herself too much to think of any other human being, either in the way of affection or admiration. Charitable she is, from her love of patronage; beauty she possesses in a dangerous degree; wit, and much nobleness of soul, are hers; but all — all overgrown by the rankest pride that ever had root in woman’s heart!’

“‘The greater, then, your triumph, fair gentleman, who have conquered it.’

“‘I deny that I have done so; I disbelieve the possibility of such a triumph: but, even if it were the case, could any free-born man submit to her caprices? No, no! — for a gentle, a true woman, I could live and die;

and, were Elizabeth poor, and a trifle humble, with that elevated soul, that exquisite beauty, and my own small but independent fortune, I would then act — with a difference. Marry, she may — an emperor, if she can get him — but there is no room in her heart for love. Why, every day, she sits at dinner a moving mass of jewels.'

"That day I made my appearance with a white rose only in my hair, and Edward complimented me for the first time. I resolved to attempt a conquest, simply because I thought myself scorned, and was determined to be victorious. I discovered, ere many weeks, that I had absolutely riveted chains around my own heart, instead of enchaining another. Bitter was my anguish; my proud heart felt crushed within me. If I could have discovered that he regarded me with the least affection, I should have been satisfied; but thus to be won unsought! — it was a dagger planted — rankling — festering — in my bosom. Bitterly did I weep over what I considered a degradation; when the sudden and unanticipated death of my beloved parent brought to light, that I had both a friend and lover in my cousin Edward. . . . Enough of this. We were married when two years of mourning for my father had expired. Married! — what an infinity of meaning is comprised in these three little syllables — what a quantity of hope and fear, of happiness or misery, do they imply! My husband was a Montague, so that the honours of our house remained fresh as ever; he was one, too, who rather increased than diminished the very quality he so earnestly condemned; for I was more proud of Edward Montague, than of either my riches or my ancestry. I felt myself elevated, indeed, in the scale of moral existence, when honoured by his love; and well I might, for a more noble, a more glorious creature never lived: he dwelt upon the earth without being contaminated by its baseness; his mind was a treasure-house, filled with all that was admirable in ancient or modern times; and his knowledge was blended with a taste so refined, yet so true, that it consecrated whatever it arranged. Nor was this all: his temper was of so gentle a nature, that the lamb might lick his hand, and ring-doves nestle in his bosom; yet, being justly angered, he carried himself with such veritable bravery, that his enemies (if, indeed, he had any) would quail beneath the lightning of his deep-blue eye. With what a holy, yet decided, spirit would he reprove my faults, teaching me humility by his own example, and the wisdom of holiness by his own life! Obedience to him was no task: I looked — and looked — and loved; *loved!* — that is too cold a phrase — may God forgive me for it — I worshipped! — worshipped my husband as devoutly as ever I worshipped my Creator! Hitherto, happiness had fenced me in on every side; the little I had suffered rendered my blessings all the brighter; and still my joyfulness increased — for I became a mother!

"Poets have written, and may write — write on for ever — but they never can portray, never convey even an idea, to those who have not experienced them, what a mother's feelings are at the first faint cry of her first-born child! the creature of her love — the cause of her late agony — breathes — lives; the infant's feeble wail is as the trumpet of hope sounding to her heart, of days — months — ages of happiness. She looks on the faint tracery of its features, and discovers a beauty seen by no other eye; she trembles, lest her embrace of love should injure its delicate limbs; she places it on her husband's bosom, and, if she never prayed before, she prays then; what she prays, she hardly knows, but the ALMIGHTY hears, and notes her petition; and my belief is, that, if fitting, it is always granted at such an hour. O that a woman's prayer was ever — 'Lord, this babe is thine! do thou what is best and meetest for it!' Such is the prayer of the humble and believing Christian — such was my husband's prayer — but such, I fear me, was not mine.

"Our boy grew; and another child came—a little delicate girl, who was enveloped in cotton, and sheltered even from the summer air;—but she, too, lived, and danced after butterflies on our shaven lawn, and was a sweet, soft, silent thing; yet, when she tossed her yellow hair from off her small and lovely features, it was as if a gleam of sunshine sparkled, then flitted from your sight. A proud woman exults in her sons, but a tender father loveth best the imploring weakness of a delicate girl. She is a renewal of the poetry of his youth—a sort of living dream—shadowy and trembling like a moonbeam—which he may wake and lose in a brief moment;—and, my Olympia was lost! In the morning, she had played at our feet with her brother—she had chased the shadows over the green turf—she had watched the bee collecting honey for its cell, and had strewed the sweetest flowers in its path, that, as she said, 'it might not work so hard'—she had done all this, and her father noted, that her voice sounded more of joy, in its quiet laughter, than it had ever done before. That night *his* beloved, his cherished one, was a cold corpse—she sickened and died within a few short hours. My husband sat with her on his knees in tearless agony—for me, I wept. You see me stern, severe, and cold—*sorrow has hung its icicles on my heart*. Ay, despite our golden pageantry, grim Death *will* come—'tis a sad truth for those who live on gold: and, even now, I love not much to think of it—and why? There is *another* text which I remember—

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

"If God had taken all my purpled state, I think I could have borne it; my heart *might* have rebelled, but my lips would not have murmured—would not, as they have done, have disturbed the night from its allegiance to repose. Great was my pride, and great has been my penalty. Yet, still, I ask—"

Here a considerable quantity of the manuscript was effaced; and, if I noted right, the paper was blistered by tears. What would she have asked? I longed—but dreaded to inquire. I fear me 'twas not mercy; for, though she had quailed, she had not sunk, before sorrow; and her lofty carriage, her proud yet generous conduct, and, above all, the quick rich glance of her eagle eye, recorded a spirit glorying in earthly dominion. With how blind a zeal do we carve out our own misery, magnifying, by a singular and pernicious effort of human skill, the trials of a sensitive imagination into the real miseries of life! The trials and troubles of this golden lady were not, however, *imaginary—they were real*.

I continued.

"For some time previous to the loss of my little girl, I had observed, with breathless anxiety, a sort of morbid, dreamy habit, in which my husband seemed often to indulge. It was too restless to be called melancholy—too intense to be disturbed without considerable care. I have sat for hours together, watching his eyes fixed on vacancy, and his lips moving occasionally in abstracted motion: at such times I have recalled his attention by singing, at first in a low tone, snatches of his favourite songs; sometimes a sentiment appeared to rivet his attention,—at another period it was the melody that recalled his wandering thoughts. I would often inquire what he had been thinking of; but he invariably parried my question, and atoned for his inattention by redoubled vivacity—a vivacity

which I well knew was foreign to his nature. My blessed husband! Years and years have passed; many of unutterable happiness, a greater number of intense misery — misery which the shining of my jewelled state increased a thousand-fold; for obscurity would have softened and concealed my sorrow, but the glare and the glitter of situation held it up, as a light set upon a hill, to illumine the humble as to the wretchedness of rank. Years have, indeed, passed; and my hair is gray, my step feeble, my eyes have melted their lustre into tears; and I am an aged woman, tottering on the brink of my ancestors' vaulted graves! Yet, Edward, thou art with me still! In the deep hours of midnight I listen to thy counsel; thy shadow comes before me in all the beauty of feeling and expression; the reproofs so wisely timed, that, even to my proud ears, they sounded more like praise than censure; the gentle firmness, blending the husband and the friend in one; the quiet eye — I see it now as when in life — so still, and yet so dignified! Never does a proud thought grow into action, or a scornful word rise to my lip, that *his eye* comes not upon me; and its behest is done — for the action is repented of — the word suppressed!

"Have mercy, Heaven! those are the remembrances of my earlier days; but there are others of far different import. I remember, after Olympia's death, how *his* abstraction increased, until — but the records, the public papers, those chartered chroniclers of whatever chances of evil — *they* told the news! — they surmised upon it — the court chattered of it — the members of the house that had often rung with acclamations, as his fine voice, rolling like a flood of light, dispersed the mists from their minds, and sent conviction to their stubborn hearts — the very members of *that* house had learned to prate of him as '*poor Edward Montague!*' I could not understand how it was — but the Almighty had taken the soul before the body was yielded to corruption.

"He knew me not — *my husband looked into my face and did not know me* — he did not know his own child! I could have borne the revilings, the wildness, of a madman; but the helpless, hopeless — Alas! alas! that ever I was born!

* * * * *

"My son — I lived for him! Time was gaining upon him, as upon us all; but as yet he had the advantage of the destroyer — he distanced him in the race, for his intellects were far beyond his age: his beauty! — but it was enough for me that he was like his father; he was in every respect — in almost every respect, — all that I could desire; and, with all the devotedness of a mother, I looked forward to what he would be hereafter; the staff of a noble house, the observed of all observers. I did perpetual violence to my own feelings, by endeavouring to nip every bud that promised a blossom of pride; for, though my husband had restrained the haughtiness of my nature, and though, Heaven knows, he was himself a living illustration of what may chance to the best and greatest, yet I cannot *now* deceive myself into the belief that restraint is conquest; and my poor boy inherited, to the full, his mother's PRIDE! His temper was violent in the extreme; and, with his father's affliction ever before mine eyes, I yielded to, rather than opposed, his paroxysms of rage. I dreaded lest I might, by contradiction, bring forward some dormant malady that would, a second time, destroy my hopes of everything like happiness. Time! that bane and blessing of existence — that purveyor of good and evil, softened much of the agony I at first endured; it taught me patience. My husband never left his own dwelling; a separate wing of Montague House was appropriated to his sole use; and, though he did not know me, he was evidently pleased and comforted by my attentions. His wanderings! — I will not stamp upon this silent paper: the wanderings of a maniac should be as sacred a deposit with a wife as *her husband's faults*; a woman forgets what is due to herself when she condescends

to that refuge of weakness — a confidant : a wife's bosom should be the tomb of her husband's failings, and his character far more valuable, in her estimation, than his life. If this be not the case, she pollutes her marriage vow.

I have said that time softened my sorrow — it did more — it created new hopes. At Harrow, my son carried all before him — his abilities were acknowledged by masters and pupils ; but, with all my partiality, I saw that his temper, instead of being improved, had acquired strength by frequent victory.

"The heir of forty thousand a year is seldom kept in order at a public school, except by a lad who has fifty in prospective.

"I learned that my son had constantly conquered ; that he had been first of the first ; that, in mind, he was without a competitor, and that he had distanced all his compeers in manly and athletic exercises. Previous to his going to Oxford, it was determined that he should spend some months at home ; the truth was, I feared that his health might suffer from continued application, and I wished also to scan more distinctly his character.

"My fears were soon aroused, and my perceptions quickened.

"Of his classical attainments I was no competent judge ; but, certainly, extreme quickness often, too often, I thought superseded the necessity for study. He wrote verses with great facility ; but I saw, with feelings which cannot be described, that his models were the most licentious of our English poets. Of his taste for what he termed 'old English sports,' he gave sufficient proof, by living more in the tennis-court and stables than in the library or drawing-room. He heard me reprove and reason, reason and reprove, with tolerable patience ; but, when I kept him longer than he deemed necessary, there grew a wild impatience in his eye that made me shudder and be silent.

"*'Ralph !'* I heard him say, one evening, to his favourite companion, after I had endeavoured to convince him of the necessity for closer study, and extorted something of a promise of obedience to my request ; *'Ralph, do you know how I silence Lady Elizabeth ? I tip her the madman's eye — so — and she turns quite pale !'*

"Merciful heavens ! was it possible that my son could jest at his father's infirmity — could make sport of his mother's feelings ! I knew not what to do or what to say. Was this indeed my son — my first-born — my only one — him on whom I had poured out the first torrent of maternal affection — the being of my dreams — the son of him who was all benevolence and honourable deeds, who abhorred deceit, and scorned all things unworthy ! Alfred's extravagance and utter heedlessness I little thought of, for I entertained the opinion, that they are the strongest and noblest trees which require the most pruning — but the expedient, to rid himself of my reproofs by such a means ! — When, in the twilight of that same evening, I sat gazing from hour to hour upon my poor senseless husband, who, silently and with folded arms, paced up and down the long verandah, which I had built to enable him to exercise in all weathers ; when I marked his eye, still exquisite in form, but mantled by the dread disease, shorn of its beams, yet looking towards the heavens, and pointing with childish glee to the stars as, one by one, they left their mysterious caverns and paced the paths allotted to them by the great Architect of all immensity ; when, I say, I looked at that human wreck, I trembled — I shuddered to think upon the frail bark about to launch on the multitudinous ocean of public life. My husband had been struck by Heaven ; but my son ! — I dreaded he would fall by earthly means — become contaminated by the low and base, the prey of designing sharpers and knaves. Feeling, I was but too well convinced, he lacked ; and I doubted his principles — I feared their stability ; I dreaded that those born of noble parents were subject to the self-same

vices as those in less exalted spheres ; and, thoroughly alive to the belief that the disgrace of the child is the completion of a parent's misery, no matter what her former trials may have been, I prayed, while drops of agony burst upon my brow, that I might be spared the dreadful results that would arise if my son should be unworthy of his name. I brooded in silence over the disappointment which I already felt ; I mixed still less in society, and restrained my son, perhaps too much, from the sports and company of youths of his own age : — perhaps, had I yielded on minor points, and indulged him in trifles, he might not have run so restive in matters of greater consequence. I was mortified that a Montague should require the same pastime as a Jones or a Jackson ; I thought of the proud days of my own youth, and, soured rather than humbled by the trials I had experienced, I made but small allowance for the difference between a girl and a boy, and, I fear me, too little for the deteriorating influence of the times. The people now-a-days look upon nobility as a thing to be talked with — used and abused — as if it were of themselves ; and though my son's pride effectually prevented him from entering into this belief, it was of the spurious kind that too frequently mistakes insolence for dignity ; so that I was often as much shocked at his assumption of greatness, where it was uncalled for, as at his want of it where it was necessary to his state.

"He went to Oxford ; and I was richly complimented on my son's beauty, wit, and talent. I was told that he excelled in the qualifications so necessary for a true gentleman ; and I resolved to supply him liberally with money, and such advice as I could offer. The knowledge of his faults was locked within my own bosom ; and the world — *our* world — were loud in their applause. Mothers, rich and titled ones, told me that they *envied* my happiness in having such a son. In the masquerade of life, how little we know what we do envy !

"It was a quiet still evening, and I had retired to my chamber, after being as usual with my husband, until the hour when he went to rest. In two months more my son would be of age ; and I looked forward to the time with an anxiety in which none but mothers can sympathize. I knew that he had cultivated his oratorical talents with more than usual care ; and, despite his faults, it was impossible to look upon his youthful demeanour without feelings of admiration. My thoughts passed rapidly over my former years ; and, though I dreamed not of happiness, I dreamed of triumph. Again I triumphed in my son, — but my dream was disturbed at its commencement, — for Alfred, flushed with wine, and under strong excitement, rushed, unannounced, into my chamber.

"*'Mother !'* he exclaimed ; *'mother, I must have money. Money, and instantly, for here I cannot stay !'* I looked on him, overcome by terror and anxiety, while he reiterated his demand for money.

"*'Why, — why need I dwell upon it ? I discovered he had gambled. Again and again had he indulged in this dreadful propensity. The sums — the enormous sums — forwarded to Oxford for his authorized wants and desires, had been squandered away in profligate company. And then he came before me, reiterating his demand for money. He had been publicly arrested by a tradesman ; and not only that, but scorned and scouted by his oldest companions ; — — — ; but he deserved it all — all — not only for his want of conduct, but his want of candour. He placed no confidence in me, — me — his mother, who would have died to secure his honour ; and now I was indebted to circumstances, not to himself, for the disclosure of his disgrace — disgrace ! — black and bitter disgrace ! But he did not feel it — that was but too evident. He talked of his coming of age putting an end*

to his difficulties — rendering everything smooth — preventing his affairs spreading; and passed from purpose to purpose, from scheme to scheme, with a terrific rapidity. I saw that no time was to be lost. I found he had already been in the hands of money-lenders; and that even now he would have resorted to them, had it not been impossible for him to raise fresh funds without my consent. But I cared nothing for the paltry gold. Of what value was it to me? And though the sum necessary was tremendous, I would have increased it tenfold, to prevent the possibility of the distress of a Montague gaining the public ear.

"The next morning the following paragraph met my eye in a conspicuous part of a fashionable journal: —

"We understand that a certain scion of a noble house has been coolly looked upon at Oxford, as not fulfilling his pecuniary engagements, and neglecting his debts of honour. We regret this, more particularly, as we know it is his intention to start for the County after his coming of age. And we would remind those who are most severe in their animadversions on the gentleman in question, that there *may be*, — we do not say there *is*, we only say there *may be*, — a cause for his eccentricities, which we should deeply regret."

"Here followed immediately, but apparently without connexion, another paragraph: —

"We hear the Hon. E. Montague continues in excellent *bodily* health: this, under existing circumstances, is hardly to be desired."

"O for the obscurity of Smiths, and Brownes, and Bungays! Who would have observed their 'eccentricities,' or cared for their 'existing circumstances,' or taken the pains to pen a paragraph to enlighten the world on their movements? But the vulgar love to hear and tell some new thing respecting the 'nobility;' — they gape for, and swallow, all the falsehoods put forth as facts, of their frailties and their habits; and whoever invents most, is, consequently, the most popular."

"How my heart bled at this fresh wound, and the tearing open of the old and rankling sore! Merciful Heaven! how many wounds are inflicted on a proud heart, which the humble-minded can never understand!

"I wished — yet dreaded — that my son should see this reference to him. I afterwards learned that he had seen it, and laughed it to scorn."

"Whatever I might endure from repeated disappointments, I kept my feelings to myself. How have I prayed that my husband had been spared, to direct by his wisdom, and render virtue still more lovely by example! How I have regretted my poor buried girl! Alas! alas! I felt more deeply, every hour of my existence, the force of that text, which, like a knell, often rang mournfully on my heart — 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Yet I clung to it, — to the pomp, and pageantry, and state. I clung to it, proudly — earnestly; and, throwing aside my retired habits, I resolved to celebrate my son's coming of age with festivities; not at Montague House, for I could not support the idea of mirth and music in those halls, where the poor maniac wandered! He, whose lamp *once* shone so brightly; it would have been an insult to his affliction to bring festivity within his dwelling. And yet it was necessary; no Montague, for centuries, had come of age unsung, uncelebrated. And the idea of such an event being unrecorded, would have confirmed all the reports circulated, — and circulated but too truly, to his disadvantage. Totally reckless of what was said or thought, for nearly a month previous he was busied in arranging a series of fetes and amusements for his birth-day: and I endeavoured to enter into those plans, and to argue myself into the belief, that now he would see the error of his ways, become careful of his society, and do as much credit to his name, by deeds of honour and charity, as his manners and personal beauty did to his descent. — It was a fallacious hope!

"At Alfred Park, another of our estates, were assembled the descendants of, as well as numbers of those, who, on a former occasion—then many years passed—assembled to celebrate my age of womanhood. Some I had not seen for years; and sufficient of woman's vanity rested round my heart to make me feel a hope that I was not so changed—so very much changed—as many I observed around me.

"We are so apt to compare ourselves with what we were a month—a week ago, that time works its furrows without our heeding its progress.

"The dinner, and its attendant ball—a *bal masqué*,—passed off with much noise and; — — — but I was not calculated to judge of its effects. My son spoke and acquitted himself so well, that while listening to the music of his voice—while contemplating the grace of his movements, the dignity of his address, and the purity, both in style and sentiment, of his eloquence—I forgot all—everything—except that he was my son.

"Agreeably to a determination I had formed, of never sleeping from under the same roof that canopied what I may too truly call my husband's remains, I got into my carriage as the morning dawned; and, just as the horses were setting off, a letter was thrown in at the window, which—God help me!—I read by the light of the blessed sun, before he was half risen.

"At the very time when the veins on my forehead were swelled to intense torture by the persual of that unfortunate paper, the *élite* of three counties were discussing—my jewels—my equipage—and my happiness! I laughed convulsively as this thought crossed my mind; for I saw the impression my son had made on all, by the grace and suavity of his manners. Even those (and they were not a few) who had come prepared to dislike him, went away convinced, that report was a false liar, and that Alfred Montague was worthy of his name! I knew all this—and more. I knew that Alfred Montague was—what I dare not write—what I dare not, even now, though the grave has closed over my child; and though the fair hand that, urged both by destitution and despair, traced those faint lines to me, in her extreme necessity, is a crumbling skeleton in the consecrated ground, which my charity, not his justice, bestowed—I dare not, though they are all gone, think upon what I read that morning, while the beams of the rising sun pried through my crimson blinds! O, who would wish to be a mother, if they knew a mother's trials! But the worst was yet to come! I had to endure the laugh of contempt—the sneer—when I repeated to him the tale of distress created by his own depravity. I had to listen to the defence of a heartless libertine, and that libertine—my own son. I was forced, by my love of justice and of mercy, to visit the victim of his sin, to catch the last faint sighs of her departing breath, and to hear her pray—poor girl—that God would bless her destroyer, and save him from the wrath to come!

"Her devotion, her noble sentiments, her Christian fortitude, her pure charity, her freedom from selfishness, rendered her, in my estimation—poor pale departing flower that she was—fit mate for any noble in the land. Deception visits not the couch of death; it is no place for a bland smile—no refuge for pride—no temple for extravagance; there is a stern reality in the silent chamber, a truth in the sobbing breath; the pall may be of silver or of serge, but death, the same death, is beneath both. My little girl departed in a quiet sleep, and woke in heaven. But this woman was in the blossom of her beauty and her youth; and, though the spirit may bend to the decrees of the Almighty, yet the flesh will battle with the destroying angel—will struggle in his grasp. I witnessed her convulsions and her death! It was a small, a wretched room, and she was nearly starved; and I saw *his* last letter; it lay upon her heart; and, cruel as it was, she kissed it, ere she died. And in it he advised— —! Now may the Lord

forgive him, for it was a foul insult to the faithful dove, who had left her parents, home, and braved the world, for him!

"The church clock of the neighbouring village struck nine. At this same hour, the previous night, I had been entranced by his eloquence. I had argued myself into the belief that his faults were venial; but before me lay the proof of cool and deliberate vice. She had suffered and sacrificed for him her good name; and yet he had, when tired of his victim, refused her even the means of existence. He did not think I would have sought her out; he thought me all too proud for such a course. He did not know his mother!

"I cut off a tress of the long black hair which swept round her like a shroud. I thought that *that* might move him. He was still my child, the child of my beloved husband; and if he did repent — if a single tear even stood in his eye — I could almost have forgiven him; for in him, my pride, my love, was but one feeling — he was my *only* child.

"I directed that everything should be done in a fitting manner for her burial: and I was descending the narrow stairs, when an aged man, travel-soiled and worn, stood at the door, and asked some questions of the woman of the house. They were soon answered; and the old man staggered so impetuously up the creaking stairs, that I was obliged to re-enter the chamber of death.

"He gazed for a moment upon the pale corse; and then, throwing from him his hat and staff, knelt by the side of the wretched bed, and buried his face in the streaming hair of what had been his child!

"Here was fresh agony for me! The father had become rigid and insensible, and it was nearly an hour before he recovered from a state of frightful torpor. He seemed ashamed of the emotion he had betrayed. His features, though venerable, were stern and harsh; his brow wrinkled; groans and tears struggled within his bosom; yet he would not let them forth. He looked at me — I almost thought suspiciously; — but when the woman of the cottage named my name, (for I was too near my own neighbourhood to be concealed,) the miserable parent burst forth into a torrent of reproaches upon mine, and me. He told me of my pride. He declared that on the only interview he had ever obtained with my son, after his daughter's destruction, he had said that it was his mother's pride alone that prevented his marrying 'Mary.' The afflicted man spoke in a harsh, suppressed, grating voice, grinding out his words, and then bursting forth his anger like a torrent over a rugged rock. I could not contradict the opinion he had formed of Alfred. I could only for myself say, that I knew naught of the attachment.

"He knelt again; but it was to pronounce a curse — the curse of a desolate parent upon my wretched son. I was not too proud to supplicate — to implore him to restrain his imprecations. 'I will not commit murder,' he said; 'but I call to God for vengeance on the head of the destroyer. The law of man cannot attach his crime, but God can, and will, punish!'

"I trembled violently while he continued; the cold dew stood like hail upon my brow, — my blood curdled and crept slowly through my distended veins, — my tongue clave to my lips, as the curse of the desolate father mounted to the THRONE of the Almighty. Again I supplicated. I was mad enough to offer gold to quell a parent's grief! 'And you, that are a mother, think gold can yield consolation to one bereaved like me! — to one, whose only child lies there! O, Mary, Mary, why did you not return! I would not have chided. We would have prayed together as we used. We would have mingled tears at the footstool of the Lord, and I should once more have heard you murmur, Father! But now, Mary, my child, you are dead, and I am desolate!' A burst of natural grief succeeded, and I entered my



splendid equipage with a bursting heart. O, misery unspeakable! I knew that old man's curse was registered in heaven, for it was deserved!

"As I entered the hall, I encountered a deputation, at that unseasonable hour, consisting of some of the principal persons in the county, who had come to announce to my son the sudden death of one of the members of the shire, and to request that he would immediately solicit the suffrages of the electors.

"I thought I should have sunk into the earth while receiving the compliments of those men. I crept to my chamber like a guilty thing; and, dismissing my attendants, desired my son's presence. I told him what I had witnessed. I dared not trust myself with reproaches, for, if I had, they would have known no bounds. He listened to my tale without emotion. I drew forth the silken braid of her beautiful hair. He grew pale — his lip quivered — his eyes filled with tears. Thank God! he was not entirely lost; for, though he expressed nothing, he was moved. Even as a drowning man grapples at a floating straw, so will a mother seize any indication of mere humanity in a profligate child, as a symbol of returning virtue.

"A few days after this, my dear, my venerated husband, was, by an easy and painless transition, wafted to eternity. He regained his senses nearly two hours before his death. He called for me; yet, when I came, at first he knew me not. He had not traced the gradual changes in my face, and now they took him by surprise. Soon he was all himself; — spoke of his illness — of Olympia's death, as things of recent date. But what was most strange, he never inquired for his son. This, in one respect, was happy; for he was absent, canvassing the county, soliciting the 'most sweet voices' of high and low, and leading the innocents of those days to believe that he was a miracle of patriotism and virtue. But this assumption did not pass with me; both my maternal love and my maternal pride had been blasted; and the curse, the fearful curse, still rang upon my ear.

"He behaved with tolerable decency on his father's death, which opened afresh the wounds I had received when first reason departed from him. I had often thought that I could have better supported his death than his intellectual prostration; but I was mistaken. The adage, 'While there is life, there is hope,' was most true in my case. While he was before me, I hoped, in the very jaws of despair; but the vault was now closed, and hope had indeed departed!

"My son was elected without opposition; and though there were many rumours afloat to his disadvantage, still, patronage and popularity — and above all, gold, worked their way. There was seldom more rioting, or more excess, committed in the neighbouring town, than on the day when he was declared representative of the county.

"I was sick at heart, and happy, that my husband's recent death afforded sufficient reason for my remaining in strict seclusion. One of the windows of my chamber overlooked the park-gates, and as the shouts of the half-drunken electors came madly on the air, I glanced for an instant over the scene — it was no delusion — there stood 'Mary's' father, leaning, like Jacob of old, 'on the top of his staff,' his eye fixed upon my window, while a smile of scorn and contempt curved his chiselled lip, and lighted his hollow eye with an expression most hard to bear. I was riveted to the spot. Some fools among the crowd espied me, and called for 'three cheers for the noble Lady Elizabeth.' How I hated popularity! I hastened from the window, but yet continued long enough to see the old man lift his hat, in mockery, from his head, while his hair streamed in the wind like the pennon of a phantom ship.

* * * * *

"I remained too proud (my foes would say) to permit the world to know that any difference existed between my son and myself. He had now entered fully upon his political career; and though the party his ancestors, for a series of years, had invariably supported, were then out of power, still his eloquence commanded attention, and his steadiness to his friends respect.

"The dignity of political consistency was then appreciated as it ought to be. Men—or *things* called men—were not whirled about by every blast of interest or wind of doctrine, to serve or bow to the mania of ill-grounded opinion. It was something to be a statesman in those days.—I will not say what it is now; because political discussions are opposed to both the delicacy and dignity of a well-born woman. Enough for her that she venerates the Church and honours the King. This will sufficiently exercise her love and faith—a woman's best and dearest qualities. At least, I argued with myself, the world knows naught of what so rankles in my heart, and even if it did——

"Alfred Montague was dressed after—courted—flattered—worshipped. How little is the world acquainted with its idols—how little do we know what we admire! We imagine a deity—clothe it with our fancy—then fix upon some living temple for our creation to inhabit, and call it 'perfection.' Yet was I not insensible to the homage paid to my son. Next to deserving, there is nothing so sweet as receiving, praise; though I knew his moral hollowness, I clung to the belief that he was politically honest. And were it not for that old man's curse, I would have hoped—ay, hoped for him for ever. What a blessed thing it is for humanity, that hope, like the fabled phoenix, springs anew from its own ashes!

"I was one morning startled by the intelligence that Lord L—— wished to see me immediately. I well knew this sudden visit boded no good. He thought my son was at Montague House. He was told so by his servants in town. Three nights he had been absent from the House when questions interesting to his constituents were debated. He was looked for everywhere, and certain rumours had aroused Lord L——, who, from an old friendship subsisting between our families, as well as from other motives, watched my son's career with as much anxiety as if he had been his own. He came to me to inquire if he were wavering. I said I would stake my life on his integrity. He shook his head.

"I ordered my carriage, resolved to find my son, and know the truth at once. Had the party his father and all his family so long-supported been in power, I could have forgiven his defalcation, but to desert their cause when his support was needed! Memory whispered that he *had* deserted a once dear object, when most she wanted his assistance. Ay, but his political honour, his fame,—the disgrace!

"I arrived at four o'clock at Alfred Park. I learned there that my son had only left about an hour for town. Was any one with him? Yes; it was one of the leading members of the administration.

"My brain burned. I ordered fresh horses—post-horses; and, without alighting, proceeded to London. It was night as we drove past Hyde Park Corner, and the rain pattered heavily against the carriage windows as the ponderous knocker echoed through the aristocratic silence of St. James's square.

"Mr. Montague had just gone down to the house. He had not set off three minutes."

"Was any one with him?"

"Yes, the same cabinet minister who had been with him at Alfred Park!"

"I drove to the House of Commons, and was informed by the usher, that Mr. Montague had not arrived, but that he doubtless soon would, as a very important motion was to be brought on by the opposition.

While I was yet speaking, Alfred would have passed. I believe he did not know me. He said he did not. I went with him into one of the ante-rooms, and at once charged him with dishonour and desertion. He endeavoured to avoid reply, and stammered forth something about change of times and prejudices, and all the jargon of those who find it convenient to desert their friends in their necessities. I argued, I entreated, I endeavoured to arouse his pride. I spoke to him of his father, of his family. I implored his attention. I pictured his falsehood, the scorn of his partizans, the contempt of his new friends. I talked of the virtues of those of ancient days, who died to uphold the welfare of their country. I reminded him of the time when he used to sit upon my knee, and read of the heroes of old, whose religion was patriotism. I wept—positively wept—burning scalding tears, into his bosom. And he promised—swore by all that was sacred in heaven and earth, that he would not swerve from his old party.

"I met Lord L——, and told him of my triumph. Nor was this all. I determined to ascend to the ventilator, and there exult in the disappointment of that 'dog in office,' who had tempted him to disgrace. There were a good many ladies in that elevated pest-room, but they made way for me, and I was stationed on the self-same spot, where, many years before, I had often listened to the sound—I may truly call it 'music'—of his father's voice. I know not who spoke, nor what was said. I only know how fatally I distinguished one person—one event.

"My son entered, in a state of intoxication, with his new 'leader;' took a seat behind the treasury bench; and, not satisfied with silent disgrace, spoke, ay, spoke (would that he had been born dumb!) against the principles of his ancestors. He spoke as well as he could speak under such circumstances, for his desertion and his intoxication were evident to the whole house. Groans from one side, and a species of half-applause from his new friends, were his reward—the only reward he obtained; for, before the ratification of the appointment he was to receive as the recompense of his apostacy, his party went out of power, and Lord L——, our old and valued friend, was appointed premier.

"I regret, dear Lady Elizabeth," said this excellent man to me, 'that I cannot do as I would desire for your son.'

"Sir," I replied, 'the man who is *once* untrue to his party, should never again be trusted. I desire none of my country's privileges for the unworthy scion of our once noble house.'

"As I am a born and living lady, I felt ashamed to return to Montague House. What could I say to the electors? How could I look, or speak, or act? Was I not an apostate's mother? Was not the finger of scorn everywhere pointed, at 'Montague, the fool and the betrayer?' Was not the county in an uproar? Was he not obliged to accept the 'Chiltern Hundreds?' Did not the papers surfeit with lampoons, and the print-shops with caricatures? And were there not many, *friends* they called themselves, who dared to send me those symbols of his disgrace, expressing their concern—their *pity* even,—at 'what had occurred.'

"In the midst of all these realities, would come the remembrance of that poor, pale, skeleton girl; and her father's curse, ringing in mine ears. And then, because of his unpopularity, the 'Oxford business' became the subject of country animadversion;—and—I went to Italy.

"Let no one desire children. Let no one wish to have the quiver filled with those living arrows. I shall die childless—as a punishment for my pride. If great was my sin, great has been my tribulation.

"My son, too, went abroad, to blot out the memory of past offences by

the committal of fresh faults: — and one night, at Naples, he was borne into my palazzo, killed, like a dog, in the streets, by some villain's stiletto, in a drunken brawl — the last of his line: — a creature of talent, of beauty, of extraordinary powers, yet wanting in those requisites which, I have observed, are often granted to those of much commoner capacity.

"It was night, and I heard the sound of many voices in the dissonant tones of drunkenness beneath my palace windows — and his voice among the rest — and a scuffle, and then all was still. Suddenly, a rush of men, a glare of lights, and my poor, erring, sinful son, lay on the marble floor, the red blood oozing to my feet; and I kissed his lips, his brow, his cheek — for, oh, was he not my child!

"For several days I knew not what they did to him or me; but one night I heard a noise of nails and screws — and then it ceased — and the knowledge of the dread reality was with me. And when they slept, I stole into his chamber — the attendants *there* slept also — and the coffin was fastened down, covered with black velvet, decked with the solemn magnificence of woe. I knew that there he was at rest. — Rest! — did I say rest! God grant it! How blessed is repose after this world's turmoil!

"Now Heaven shield me from superstition! After I had remained a while over that dismal sight, a thin and vapoury cloud arose at the coffin's foot; gray it was, as a mountain mist, and clear, for I saw the tapers burning through it, and the sleeping watchers in their repose. But there it stayed, gradually moulded by some unseen power, into the semblance of a human being, undefined, and yet distinct; it was a fearful creation, towering to the vaulted roof, — a bloodless, colourless thing — fading, yet remaining, to my sight. And — Almighty Powers! — ere it vanished, it assumed the form, the movements, of poor Mary's father!

"This was no dream. Alas! I was but too awake to misery!"

Here was another break in this "tale of woman's trials," and I was thankful for it; for I had read enough of her misfortunes — many of which would not perhaps, have happened to one less proud. I knew the rest; for I had often heard, that on her return from Italy, it was feared that her reason had been impaired by the apostacy and death of her son.

As it was, she was a beneficent and glorious relic of the olden time, and a living proof, that no situation, however exalted, can shield us from the ills and turmoils of this state of existence, in which we are doomed to work our pilgrimage to another and a different world, where "sorrow and sighing shall be no more."

Not long since the remains of the proud, but right noble Lady Elizabeth Montague were placed within the marble vault by her husband's side, and many tears were shed at her departure. *She* was, indeed, the last of a noble race. And the property, once so ample, has been divided, and the house is to be sold; the statues, and the pictures, and the books — all come to the vulgar hammer!

I had almost forgotten to say, that with her were interred two miniatures, one in each hand, each so like the other, that it was only the fact of one wearing powder, that could distinguish them; — the powdered one, she directed, should be placed in her right hand, and the arm bent, so that the hand might rest upon her heart. The other was simply laid beneath the withered palm.

THE MOSSPITS.

THE TRIALS OF AGNES HOSKINS.

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

THE PROVERBS.

IN one of the most highly cultivated counties of England, near a town the name of which I shall conceal under that of Mondrich, the following circumstances occurred. My tale is but a simple narration, and has little to recommend it but its reality. To those who yearn after exaggerated pictures of life, in any situation, it may be dull and wearisome; but those who can appreciate the sufferings and struggles of virtue, under trials of a more than ordinary nature, will, I doubt not, feel interested in what I am about to relate.

"Well, good night, Mr. Hinton, good night; we are neighbours now, and shall often meet," said Edward Hoskins, as he closed the cottage-door after his retreating guest. "A very pleasant fellow, Agnes," he continued, addressing his wife: "though you were not particularly civil to him, I know who was;" and his bright blue eye rested for a moment on his sister-in-law — a merry-looking maiden, busied in assisting Agnes Hoskins in placing aside the remains of their frugal supper.

"For shame, Ned!" retorted the blushing Jessy; "but you are ever teasing me in some way or other; and here's my sister says it is very wrong to be putting such things into my head."

Agnes turned her handsome, cheerful countenance towards her sister, and observed, in a low and more serious tone of voice than was her wont, "Jessy, I should be indeed sorry if anything got into either your head or your heart which it would be necessary to root out again."

"Well," laughed Edward, "I do n't see what harm Harry Hinton's getting into her head, or heart either, could do; he is a good-tempered, free, frank, industrious —"

"Stop there, Edward," interrupted his wife, laying her hand on his arm, "not industrious — surely not industrious!"

"No; perhaps not that exactly," replied Ned, "not what you would call industrious. But, really, Agnes, I think we both work too hard; — we ought, as Harry says, to take a little pleasure now and then, and we should return to our daily labour with more earnestness, and do all the better for it."

"I do n't think we need do better: your situation at the manor, the produce of your own little farm — all contribute to render us independent. And as to pleasure — as to happiness, Ned, look there!"

She drew aside a large linen cloth that fell from the upper part of her baby's cradle, so as to shade it from the light. Although the little thing had not cried, it was awake; and, as the father stooped to kiss it, the hands

were stretched forward to meet him, and the rosy lips parted by the light noiseless laughter of earliest infancy! It was a blessed moment: both parents gazed upon their child, and, as the mother placed it to her bosom, the father said, in a subdued tone, "You are right, Agnes; thank God, we are happy; and though, love, as you were better brought up than I was, I should like to be richer for your sake, yet somehow I think it shows you to more advantage, and draws you more into my heart, to be as you are. What the minister said of you was true, though I did not mean to tell it you, lest it might make you conceited: — 'Your wife, Hoskins,' said he, 'is never without a jar of honey, and a flask of oil, to sweeten and soften your path through life.'"

"Reach down the Bible, Jessy; although it is past ten, we must not go to bed without our chapter," observed Agnes, after a long pause. "But what books are placed upon it, Jessy?"

"A volume of songs and a novel, sister."

Agnes continued, in a reproving tone, "I thought I had no need to tell you that *that* shelf was appropriated to the Bible, Prayer, and Hymnbook, only; profane and sacred things should never mingle."

"It was not Jessy, but Hinton, who put them there," said Edward. Agnes sighed. "Why do you sigh so heavily?" inquired the husband, as he turned over the leaves to find one of his wife's favourite chapters.

"Because it confirms my opinion of our new neighbour. The word of God will be ever treated by a true Christian with outward respect — the proof of inward reverence. One who venerates Scripture could not rest a song-book even upon its binding."

Edward made no reply, and soon after the party retired to rest.

This little passage in the lives of those humble individuals occurred about the latter end of the month of April, a few years ago, in a retired spot, near the town of Mondrich, to which I shall give the name of Mosspsits. It was a sweet and quite nesting of five cottages, inhabited, with one exception, by happy industrious people. Four of these dwellings were joined together; the fifth, the abode of Hoskins, stood apart, surrounded by a blossoming garden, and was of a larger size than the others. The scene might be aptly described as —

"A gentle, lonely place; the path o'ergrown
With primroses, and broad-leav'd violets,
Arch'd by laburnums and the sweet woodbine.

* * * * *
Across the green a silver streamlet ran,
Hidden and silent, as it fear'd to wake
The deep tranquillity that dwelt and slept
Even on the full-leav'd trees."

It was far away from the public road, and one large oak spread its huge branches over the green in front of the Mosspsit cottages; the trunk was surrounded by a rustic seat, where the inhabitants met every fine evening and discussed affairs of state or business with the affected sagacity of wiser heads. Hoskins possessed, as his wife had said, a lucrative situation — one that gave them abundant comforts, and would, if carefully husbanded, enable them to lay by a provision for after years.

Agnes and Jessy were the orphan daughters of a Presbyterian clergyman. Mrs. Hoskins was some years older than her giddy sister, and had enjoyed, during her father's lifetime, many advantages which he did not remain long enough in the world to bestow upon his youngest-born. Agnes had been chosen by the lady of the manor, Mrs. Cecil Wallingford, as a humble, *very* humble, companion for her daughter, — an only child, and an heiress: she was, therefore, to use the accepted phrase, "comfortably

situated ;" which, being interpreted, means, that she had her board, washing, and lodging, and the young lady's society when she was ill or without company — dined with the housekeeper — rode either inside the carriage when her friend pleased, or outside on the dicky when ditto — curled the lap-dog's hair — and sometimes suffered, under the practical jokes of her young tormentor, such mortifications as naught but her enduring spirit could have supported — was stared at, whenever seen, by the young men, who already scented the heiress's gold afar off — and received divers lessons from Mrs. Cecil Wallingford, not on errors she had committed, but on those which the lady supposed she might commit. The dependant on this purseproud family could not have been strictly called beautiful ; but there was that about her which surpassed beauty — a kind, yet animated countenance, illumined by mild and frequently upturned eyes, which lent a sort of holy expression to her delicate features. Under her after-trials it seemed almost as if a heavenly communion supported her ; for, while the tear trembled in her eye, the smile sprang to her lip, and she regained her serenity apparently without an effort.

Agnes was fortunate enough to make one real friend in this mighty family. The housekeeper, Mrs. Middleton, was a curate's widow, and felt much and kindly for the situation of one so young and unprotected ; she did all she could to soften the innumerable mortifications that awaited the pure and delicately-minded girl ; and often, when the household had retired to rest, they would seek each other's chamber, and hold sweet counsel together, thus imparting cheerfulness to the aged, and instruction to the young. When Agnes had been about twelve months at the manor, Edward Hoskins was strongly recommended, on account of his great skill in horticulture and floriculture, to the situation of gardener in Mrs. Cecil Wallingford's establishment, vacant by the death of the old man who had exercised unbounded dominion over grapery, pinery, and green-house, for nearly half a century. Hoskins wisely brought with him a new carnation of his own discovery, which had gained the first prize of the Horticultural Society. The splendid flower decided the matter, and he was immediately engaged, at a salary of a hundred and ten guineas per annum, (as the lady found he could not only act as gardener, but as steward,) and the very prettiest cottage at Mosspit was appropriated for his residence.

All was bustle in the servants' hall as the handsome young gardener talked for a moment with the head butler. The lady's-maid and chief house-duster positively quarrelled as to the right of first setting their caps at him ; though they both agreed that he behaved very rudely in passing into the housekeeper's room without bestowing the slightest notice upon their pretty persons. Mrs. Middleton and her young friend were quietly seated at tea, when the butler respectfully asked permission to introduce the new resident. Long after Agnes had departed, he lingered, and lingered, and at last asked who the young lady was. Her history was at once told ; and, to dismiss all matters of courtship briefly, they were soon married. To do Mrs. Cecil Wallingford justice, she behaved very generously to her protégée on the occasion, presented to the young couple some neat and appropriate furniture, stood godmother to their first infant, and Miss Cecil Wallingford (when sentimentally inclined) always talked of love in the Mossnit cottage, and her sweet humble friend Agnes Hoskins.

Much had been of course said, at the commencement of their union, as to the probability of Agnes being too dainty a damsel to make a useful wife ; but a little time proved the incorrectness of such surmises. Hoskins insisted on Agnes domesticating her only sister with them, and went for her to Scotland, where she had previously resided with a distant relative. No farther help than Jessy's was necessary to keep all things in order, and no dwelling, even at the Mossnits, was half so neat, half so cheerful, as their cot-

tage. Indeed, cheerfulness was Agnes's peculiar attribute — that sweet, gentle, and unobtrusive cheerfulness, which is *felt* rather than seen. Her very voice told of happiness; her eyes beamed with faith and love; and the minister's description of one of the favourites of his flock was no less beautiful than true. The disposition of Jessy was not so valuable as that of her sister; she was more mirthful, more gay, and, alas! both giddy and inconsiderate; but then, as Edward kindly observed, "she was only seventeen, and every body could not be perfect like Agnes, who certainly was different from every one else."

It is a happy thing when married folk believe perfection enthroned in each other; but it is a wise thing when they see each other's faults, and yet endeavour to conceal them. It is a severe trial of a woman's judgment, if she discover her mental superiority to the lord of her affections, and yet, while she secretly manages all things for the best, makes the world believe that she is only the instrument of his will. A wise woman *will* do this, but it is only a wise woman who *can*.

Edward was certainly inferior to Agnes in intellect; and yet, woman though she was, she never allowed her mind to rest upon the circumstance she could not avoid perceiving. *She* was a superior woman — *he* was only an ordinary man, but one in whom all kind elements were so happily blended, that his faults were forgotten in the contemplation of his better qualities. The great difference in their characters was, that Edward acted invariably from impulse — Agnes from principle.

My friends will remember that my little tale commenced in the gentle month of April, the kindly season sung of by the elegant Surry, as —

"The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings,
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale."

And passing over the two first months of summer, I come to the latter end of July. Stating at the same time, that, though nothing had occurred of a nature to destroy the actual quiet of our Mosspit family, yet a great many nameless events had filled the mind of Agnes with an apprehension which she could not account for, and dreaded to encourage. Harry Hinton was always so coolly received by her that he spent very little time at their cottage; and Agnes was continually on the watch to prevent any intimacy between Jessy and their idle neighbour. Still it was almost certain that the thoughtless girl regarded Harry with anything but indifference; and the proximity of their dwellings rendered it impossible to prevent their meeting. If Jessy took her little nephew into the garden, Hinton was most likely in his; if she stood at the door, Hinton passed it; if she went for water to the well, Hinton would carry the pitcher, at all events, as far as the great tree that shaded them from observation; and, above all, Agnes could not make either her husband or her sister think otherwise than well of Harry Hinton. Edward did not spend his evenings as constantly at home as before his acquaintance with his neighbour; Mrs. Cecil Wallingford complained that her grapes were not so fine as they had been; and the clergyman called one morning to reprimand her husband for being absent from Sabbath worship. Agnes witnessed the reproof, and heard also — what shocked her still more — her Edward utter a decided falsehood as to the cause. She knew that he had gone with Hinton, under some pretext or other, two successive Sundays to the next market-town; and when he stated he had been compelled, through the negligence of the under-gardener, to remain at the Manor while he should have been at church, his wife's face was suffused with the blush of shame, and she left their little sitting-room with a sense of degradation both new and insup-

portable to a mind like hers. The bed-room to which she retired was at the back of the house, and her child, who hourly improved in strength and beauty, was sleeping calmly on the snowy coverlet. The open window was literally curtained with roses and woodbine, through which the sunbeams could not penetrate; her fingers wandered amid their foliage, while her tearful gaze was fixed upon her boy; and she started as from a dream when the clear merry laugh of Jessy rang upon her ear; it did not harmonize with her feelings, and it was followed by words still more painful.

"You need not be afraid to speak to me, Jessy; your sister is too much occupied with the parson to heed you just now; and I long for the time that will make you mine, and remove you from her tyranny."

"Agnes is no tyrant, Harry," replied the maiden, "only a little strict; and I wish you would let me tell her ——"

"What?" inquired Hinton, after waiting for some time the conclusion of Jessy's speech — "What do you want to tell her? — that I'm your lover? — why, silly lass, she knows that already!"

"Not that exactly, but —"

"But, what?"

"I should like to tell her what you think of our laws, and of the rights of men and women; and about that good gentleman in London, who proves we are all equal, and ——"

"That you have as good a right to wear satin and gold, and ride in a coach, as Mrs. Cecil Wallingford herself; but Agnes would not believe you, Jessy, her mind is not comprehensive like yours."

"O, Harry — Harry!" exclaimed the thoughtless girl, at the conclusion of her lover's speech; "how nice I should look in white satin and French curls! It is very hard that Agnes will persist in making me band my hair like a Methodist; but I cannot think I have as good a right to ride in a coach as Mrs. Wallingford; because, you know, all her relations keep carriages — and — mine —"

The sentence was left unfinished; but Hinton soon satisfied her scruples, as to Mrs. Cecil Wallingford and the carriage, by an encomium on her beauty, a reiterated assurance of what he termed *love*, and a present, which, first having received — secondly, having admired — thirdly, and lastly, she did not know what to do with.

"I don't think Agnes would let me wear such a beautiful brooch; and I am sure she would not permit me to take a present from you, Harry."

"You need not say anything about it."

"But Agnes might see it."

"Then tell her you found it!"

Breathlessly did Agnes Hoskins wait for the reply, but she heard it not — the lovers had passed the window and walked on. Almost on the instant her husband entered the room, with an air of boisterous gayety, and, as if he had quite forgotten the clergyman's visit, rallied his wife upon the seriousness of her looks. She felt too much, and too deeply, to reply even with her usual smile. He took no notice of her change of manner — probably from a wish to avoid a recurrence to what he knew must have given her much pain — but fondled and kissed his child, and, taking it in his arms, was leaving the apartment, when Jessy quickly passed the door. "Stay, Edward; sister, come here!" exclaimed Agnes. Jessy did come, with a flushed cheek and a downcast eye.

"What have you this moment put into your bosom?" inquired Agnes; adding, without waiting for a reply, "I will not oblige you to utter the falsehood you have been directed to — where is the brooch that young Hinton gave you but now under this window? You tremble — you turn pale: Jessy, my sister Jessy! — when you crouched beside the heather and the

harebell at our father's feet, while the sun was sinking amid the hills of our own Scotland — there, at the cottage-door, when our aged parent taught you to lift up your *then* innocent hands to the Almighty in prayer and praise — I little thought you would have so soon forgotten his precepts!"

The thoughtless girl burst into tears, and Edward, whose good-nature was an active not a passive quality, kindly took her hand, and looking at his wife — "Do not be so angry, Agnes, at her receiving a love-token; Harry meant no harm — that I'll answer for; surely if he is to be her husband —"

"Her husband!" repeated Agnes, with an energy that startled both Edward and Jessy; — "the husband of Jessy Grey! I would rather shroud her for her coffin than see her married to a man devoid of religious and moral principle."

"You are strangely prejudiced against poor Harry, and a thousand times more methodistical than ever, Agnes," observed her husband.

"I am not methodistical, Edward — I am not changed — it is you who think differently; and, as the change has marred our happiness, you cannot wonder at my disliking him who has wrought it. You were independent, industrious, and happy: you now talk of the wealth of your superiors; you say it is wrong for them to possess so much, and yet you covet more: Edward, now you seldom smile — or smile so that I would rather see you weep; if you attend the village church, your eyes and mind wander from your devotions, and you rejoice at the conclusion of the service. The flowers in our garden are neglected —"

"Stop, Agnes!" interrupted Hoskins, "you have lectured me pretty sharply, I think, for nothing; have I ever suffered you to want? — have I ever treated you unkindly?"

"Oh, no! — no Edward, not unkindly — not that *yet*."

"Nor ever will, my own Agnes! I will be more with you, and show you how much you have wronged me, and Jessy too, by these misunderstandings."

"I will speak to my sister apart, Edward — give her the infant — there, Jessy, do not weep."

Jessy left the room in tears. "Now, in truth, Agnes," said Hoskins, when the door was closed, "your prejudices are amazing to me; there is not a better-hearted fellow in the world than Harry, or a more clever — I own that he thinks a little too freely, and you women don't understand that: the people are improving."

"Would," ejaculated Agnes, "that they felt Christianity to be their best legacy, and inherited the virtue of their ancestors!"

"The very thing Harry says: he vows the landlords grow worse and worse; and unless the people take them in hand there'll be no end to their tyranny."

"Did you ever experience any tyranny, Edward?"

"Never, Agnes."

"Did Hinton?"

"No — but yes he did, poor fellow, and that no later than last week. Squire Nicol's fox-hounds and the whole hunt went right through his barley; but that is not the worst of it — when he lived near Chester, his sister ran off with and was deserted by his landlord's eldest son."

"I am not surprised at that," replied Agnes, coolly, "if he instructed his sister in the principles of equality, the rights of women, and Mr. Owen's Morality. *She* only practised what *he* preached."

Agnes then proceeded to state to her husband the conversation that had passed between Jessy and Harry Hinton; in natural but forcible colours she portrayed the danger of his principles, aided by his insinuating man-

ners, and concluded with a request that Edward would at once relinquish so dangerous an acquaintance. Hoskins was much shocked at the idea that Hinton should have breathed such notions into the ear of the innocent girl, whom he loved with all the warmth of brotherly affection; he promised his wife that he would speak seriously to him on the subject, and unite with her in endeavouring to break off his connexion with Jessy Grey, whom Agnes declared she would send on a visit to an aged relative of her friend Mrs. Middleton, who dwelt near the Scottish border.

"I think your plan is best; absence and time *will* soon put love out of her head," observed Edward.

"It may do so, and I hope it most fervently," was the wife's reply — and again she entreated her husband, even with tears, to avoid Hinton.

"I promise you faithfully so much, Agnes; but circumstances, which I cannot explain, will oblige me to see him occasionally; in fact, I am in his secrets, and it would be ungenerous to desert him when I know my friendship is of value to him; he may judge wrongly, at times; but I know him to be both clever, and as good-hearted a fellow as ever lived."

Agnes shook her head, unbelievably, at the refuge of good-heartedness, under which such a multitude of sins shelter; and pleased at having, as she hoped, lessened his influence over her husband, and resolved upon a plan of action with her sister, she wisely for a time forbore any allusion to what at first so bitterly grieved her — Edward's deviation from truth.

Heavy were the tears of Jessy when told that she must leave Mosspsits for a season, and her sister refused to tell her destination. Once, and once only, did Harry Hinton speak on the subject to Edward Hoskins! But Edward firmly told him in that matter he would not interfere; Jessy was his wife's sister, and consequently Agnes had the best right to determine how she was to be situated. "My wife says," he continued, "that when Jessy comes of age she may do as she pleases, but till then she will act towards her as her father would have done had he lived till now."

Hinton made no reply, and turned moodily away, muttering curses, not loud, but deep. Agnes, almost immediately after, journeyed to London, and placed Jessy under the care of a respectable female of her acquaintance who was going to Berwick. It was not without many tears that the sisters parted; tears of reproachfulness and sorrow on the one side, and of affection and anxiety on the other. When Agnes returned in the evening, to her cottage, she felt it very desolate; a strange girl, whom she had hired for the purpose, was nursing her little boy. No Jessy's light step and gay smile welcomed her as in former times; and Edward was not at home — not come in — had not been home to dinner, nor to tea. She took the child in her arms, and seated herself on a little mound in the meadow that overlooked the high road; it was early in autumn, and troops of merry reapers passed from time to time, beguiling the way with song and noisy laughter; her boy sat on her knee, twisting the tough stems of the corn-flowers into what he lispingly called "posey," and, ever and anon, pointing, with infant wonder, at the happy groups hastening to their quiet homes. Gradually the passengers became fewer in number, the voices died away upon the hill, one by one the stars came forth in the blue heavens, and no note, save the creaking of the rail, disturbed the tranquillity that was covering the earth as with a mantle. The Mosspsit cottages, nesting in their little dell, looked the very abode of cheerfulness; and lights twinkled from two or three of the small-paned windows, showing that the dames within were busy with their small housewifery. The eyes of Agnes had rested for some moments upon the scene, when her boy's gestures drew her attention towards the road. She was somewhat surprised at observing a woman, whose tattered dress and red cloak gave her the appearance of a gipsy, forcing her way through the

hedge, and approaching her at an uneven but hurried pace. If she had been struck by her boldness, her attention was riveted by the expression of her wild and restless eye, which both watched and wandered. She appeared young; and, perhaps, under other circumstances, would have been called pretty; her figure was slight, and her hair, of a light auburn, fell in profuse but unarranged tresses over her face. She was without shoes, and the blood streamed from a wound in her foot so as to attract the notice of the little boy, who pointed to it with one hand, while he wound his arm tightly round his mother's neck.

"You did wrong to trespass, young woman," said Agnes, mildly, while the stranger stood gazing upon her with a peculiar and bewildered look — "you did wrong to trespass — but you have been sufficiently punished: wrap this handkerchief round your foot, and if you will follow me to the cottage I will give you a pair of old shoes to protect you."

The woman did not accept the offered handkerchief; but, still staring at Mrs. Hoskins, who had risen from her seat, at last said, "Do you want your fortune told?"

"No," replied Agnes, "and false as the art is, you have no pretension to it — you are not even a gipsy."

"You say truly," replied the girl; "I am not a gipsy; and yet I *could* tell much that will happen to you — *you* must be the married one — where's the other?"

"If you mean my sister," replied Agnes, "she has left England."

"Left England! — left England!" repeated the young woman, clapping her hands — "gone away from" — then suddenly changing the joyful tone in which she had spoken, added — "But not of her own accord — not of her own accord — no girl would leave *him* of her own accord."

Agnes looked upon her with astonishment, and the suspicion that the poor wanderer was a maniac occurred so forcibly to her mind, that she held her child closely to her bosom, and commenced returning to the Moss-pits.

"Stop, Agnes Hoskins, stop! — *you* sent *her* away, and I would bless you if I knew how — but I cannot remember the words." She paused, pressed her soiled but delicate fingers to her brow, and sighed so deeply that Mrs. Hoskins could not have said an unkind word to her for worlds.

"He will be returning soon!" exclaimed the girl, at last, in a hurried tone; "but look you to your husband — *maybe* you love him; and it is very sad, as the song says —

'To love — and love for ever,'

and then to find your lover go away just like the down off the thistle — and maybe for as light a breath! Well, keep him from Harry, or the curse will overshadow you; for I was as blithe and as happy as a nightingale till I kept his company — not but what I'm gay enough still — only I don't ever feel peaceful here (laying her hand on her heart) — yes, Jane is gay enough still, and does his bidding, too, as well as if he loved her; only I must not tell, because it would get Harry into trouble, that I danced round the burning ricks." She approached closely to Mrs. Hoskins while uttering the last sentence, which she pronounced slowly and in an under-tone.

An allusion to a circumstance that had excited so much terror throughout the country, and made every one look with alarm to his own homestead, caused an involuntary shudder to pass over the frame of Agnes. The wild girl shrieked, and clapped her hands on her mouth; then, without uttering another sentence, retreated rapidly across the meadow. She had not, however, reached the spot where she entered, ere she retraced her steps with visible agitation.

"They are coming," said she, "and if he sees me here he will murder me outright; do — do, just let me hide in your house till he goes to his own,

and then I can go — for it will be dark, dark night, then.”

The poor creature trembled from head to foot, and, before Agnes had time to reply, had not only established herself in the cottage, but coiled herself into an inconceivably small space in a cupboard that opened into the little passage. Edward Hoskins and Harry Hinton were soon upon the green that fronted the cottage, and the flushed cheek and loud laughter of her husband told Agnes, but too plainly, he was intoxicated. Her first feeling was that of anger and disgust — her second brought the excuse, “It is not often thus with him;” though she could not but acknowledge, what every woman so circumstanced must feel, that each time she so beholds her husband must lessen her respect — and, without *that*, woman’s love for man is little worth.

“Well, Agnes — pale, pensive, as usual!” he exclaimed, as, notwithstanding his situation, she had advanced to the door to meet him. “Won’t you wish Harry good-night?”

“I am always to suffer in Mrs. Hoskin’s opinion, I fear, although I hurried her husband home. We saw some gipsies about, and I said they might frighten you” — he added, drawing nearly to the threshold of the door, and peering into her face with his small gray eye, which she used to characterize as “cold,” but which now appeared illumined by some secret fire — “did not you see any?”

“No,” replied Agnes, without shrinking from his gaze; “many persons passed on their way, but I did not recognise any as gipsies.” Her self-possession, doubtless, disarmed the querist — for, wishing her courteously good-night, he entered his cottage, and seemed determined to shut out intruders, by carefully barring doors and windows.

“So you saw poor Jessy off, my love?” exclaimed Hoskins, throwing himself on the chairs that stood near the table. “Do n’t, for Heaven’s sake, look so calm and quiet — I know what you think — but I am sober — not quite cool perhaps — but sober — sober as a judge. Why should n’t I be a judge? Well, if I’m not wise enough for a judge, you are for a judgess — though you are not always right; now you were wrong about Hinton, for he’d have made a good husband for Jessy — only, as I said, she’s your sister, not mine: so you’ve had your own way — banished your sister, and smashed that poor fellow’s heart all to pieces. But the coach must have come very quickly; I did not think you could have been home these two hours. Give me the boy, Agnes, I have not had a kiss from either of you since I returned.”

Agnes held the child towards him, but — whether it was that the little fellow retained a remembrance of the bleeding foot and the red cloak, or that he felt the antipathy of childhood to the smell of spirits, I cannot determine — he shrunk from his father and hid his face on his mother’s bosom. Edward grew angry, and forcibly disengaged the boy, who screamed more loudly, “Mamma — mamma.”

“Take the brat!” ejaculated the father, with an oath, at the same moment throwing him with violence to Agnes — “take the brat; but I tell you that, whatever you may do, my own child shall not thwart me; this is what comes of its having an aristocratic god-mother; it already thinks my hands too rough to hold it, I suppose!”

A silly woman — nay, a woman with a moderate share of good sense, as it is called — would have replied to this, and high words would have ensued, and seeds of bitterness therewith been sown: but Agnes was a superior woman; so, without uttering a syllable, without suffering an unkind word or gesture to escape, she took the screaming infant out of the room, gave it into the arms of the little serving-maiden, and, having wiped those eyes to which unbidden tears had started, and offered up a silent but fervent prayer to the throne of God for wisdom to form and strength to persist in her good

resolves, she returned to prepare her husband's supper with her own hands.

When Agnes had seen Edward to bed, she went to seek the poor wanderer, who had sheltered in the cupboard; but the girl was gone — how, it was difficult to conjecture, unless she had let herself down from the bedroom window, which appeared partially open. It must not be supposed that Agnes was one of those women who "humour" a husband in his faults, asserting, with a mock amiability (the sincerity of which I always doubt) that they "have no right to oppose him in his little ways." A woman possessing a great and well-cultivated mind will be anxious that her husband shall both be and appear perfection, and she will watch for a fitting opportunity to point out, with gentleness and humility, whatever his better judgment, if exercised, would also declare wrong. Agnes knew it was not when he was intoxicated, that she ought to say a word calculated to add fuel to the flame, but her resolution was not less decidedly taken to combat, with her gentle strength, the growing evil.

The next morning Edward was very penitent, and for an entire week there was no recurrence of the same fault; but the evil did continue; and, with anguish which only a wife so circumstanced can feel or understand, Agnes saw that her influence and happiness were both decaying; the serpent-coil was round and round her husband, and each day added to its closeness and to its strength; she prayed, she wept, she entreated; and sometimes Edward himself would seem bitterly to feel his weakness and vow to amend it; but Hinton had attained that command over him which the powerful mind possesses over the weaker; and his duty, his business, were neglected, for the society of him he termed his friend. Mrs. Cecil Wallingford called herself upon Agnes, and told her that unless Edward paid more attention to her affairs, however unwillingly, she should be obliged to get some one else to act as steward and gardener. The suffering wife assured the lady that she would do her utmost to correct his habits, of which she refrained from complaining. Mrs. Wallingford, to say the truth, felt sincere sorrow for the altered looks of her protégée, and said many kind and complimentary things to Agnes on the extreme beauty of the bud, which seemed to increase in size and loveliness in proportion to the fading of its parent flower.

Mrs. Wallingford had hardly departed when Agnes received the following letter: —

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"*Berwick, Nov. 23.*

"It is with very sincere sorrow I inform you, that last night, without any reason that I can discover, your sister left my house; and all attempts to trace her, during the day, have been ineffectual. Lately she manifested a great uneasiness and restlessness of disposition, which I tried in vain to combat. Perhaps she has returned to you; let me hear immediately; and, praying to the Almighty to preserve you and yours in peace and happiness,

"Believe me your truly affectionate,

"T. MIDDLETON."

Agnes sat, with the open letter in her hand, more like a thing of marble than a breathing creature; and when her husband came in she presented it to him, and covering her face with her hands, wept long and bitterly.

"Hinton knows of this, Edward," she said at last, "and must be spoken to on the subject."

"Hinton knows no more of it than you do; how could he? To my certain knowledge he has never been one day or night from home since she left, and how could he get to Berwick and back in that time, think you?

Poor Jessy ! it would have been better she had married Hinton than ran off with no one knows who ; indeed, Agnes, you were wrong in sending her from us ; but troubles never come alone—the last frost has got into the pinery, and Mrs. Cecil Wallingford says it's my fault : that proud lady must alter her tone, or she'll get served out like her neighbours — there are ways of bringing fine people down — Mr. Flyhill's barns and kennel were burned last night."

"What awful times!" ejaculated Agnes; "but I know you better, Edward, than to believe you would ever approve of such dreadful doings; you know your duty to your God, your country, and your neighbour; and nothing, I am sure, would ever induce you to act contrary to it. But as to Hinton, I believe he is engaged in these horrid acts — nay, Edward, you cannot deceive me, I have combated your extraordinary infatuation in his favour by every means in my poor power—you will not hear me, Edward; you are deaf and blind as regards that evil man; and nothing now is left for me, but to weep and pray in solitude and silence—to pray for you, my own dear and beloved husband, that God may lead you to see the error of your ways, and conduct you again into the right path!"

Edward kissed her brow, as it rested on her hands, in silence, and almost with the love of by-gone days. That religion which he had once considered her brightest ornament, he now called "the weak point of her character," and thought he was doing what was very praiseworthy in bearing with it so quietly. He immediately wrote to some friends in Scotland, about Jessy, and applied to the nearest magistrate to know what means it would be necessary to adopt to trace out the lost and unfortunate girl. Hinton protested he knew nothing of the matter—swore by all that was sacred he had never heard from her since she left the Mossfits—but failed in convincing Agnes of the truth of one word he uttered.

"You have studied the character of St. Thomas, at all events," said her husband, in a sneering tone, "and taken a lesson in unbelief."

"If I could find out what it is that Hinton believes in, and he would swear by it, then I might believe him," replied Agnes, mildly.

Day after day, week after week, passed, and no tidings came of the lost Jessy. Much did Agnes wish that the wandering girl, whose mysterious prophecy seemed rapidly fulfilling, would again flit across her path; and often did she watch the highway, hoping yet dreading that the tattered cloak and light form of the strange being might issue from it toward Mossfits. Although Edward was more and more estranged from his home, he thought it necessary to apologize occasionally to Agnes for his absence: ill at ease with himself, he could not be expected to be kind toward others; and she felt how very bitter it is to be obliged to take the cold leaden coin of civility, in lieu of the pure and glowing gold of warm affection. It is utterly impossible to describe how the alteration in a cherished and beloved object affects her who loves more fondly and fervently, after years of union, than she did when, like the most admirable of Shakspeare's heroines, she bestowed herself at the holy altar to the one being almost of her idolatry, wishing—

*"That only to stand high on his account,
She might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account."*

How quickly does the ear note if the voice be not as tender as in former days! To father—mother—friends—all may seem unchanged; but the wife, who has dwelt upon every look—who knows, as it were, even the number of rays which that beloved eye throws forth—painfully sees and feels the difference. The words, perchance, may be as kind; but their tone is altered. What boots it to her if the universe views her with admiration—if the

wealth of nations be piled at her feet! *He is changed!* That consciousness is the sword which, hanging by a single hair, threatens, sooner or later, her destruction, and prevents her enjoying any earthly happiness or repose. Not only Edward, however, but circumstances, were also altering at the Mosspits. The disturbed state of the country made each person suspicious of the other; and, as the winter advanced, so did distress progress. In the neighbouring districts workmen of all trades had refused to take employment without increased wages: not a night passed but cattle were destroyed, or out-houses, and in some instances dwellings, burned to the ground. Landlords knew not which of their tenants to confide in; and the misery was increased by soldiers being frequently distributed and stationed where the people absolutely lacked the means of supporting themselves. It was pretty generally rumoured that Hinton was concerned in these transactions, though no one exactly knew how. He was the principal leader of a debating-society in Mondrich, which had the misfortune to attract the attention of the magistrate, who sought to put it down perhaps by measures that might have been called violent. Be that as it may, he succeeded; and it formed a most desirable theme for the disaffected to dwell upon. Hoskins grumbled incessantly at the magistrate's "illegal" proceedings; and Agnes combated his arguments, or rather his opinions, in vain. Christmas, that trysting-time which generally brings an interchange of kindness and social feeling among all classes of society, had come; and a little episode, that occurred at Mosspits, will at once show the state of feeling of both husband and wife. They had been in the habit of exchanging presents, during preceding years, on Christmas day, each anxious to surprise the other with some more peculiar gift. Christmas eve, Edward did not return until the village clock had chimed eleven, and then he went sullenly to bed, without heeding the little preparations that Agnes was making for the approaching festival. She was alone; for, finding that her husband's habits prevented him from bringing home the produce of his earnings, she had wisely parted with her little servant, considering it was better to labour with her own hands than to incur debt. "And," said she meekly, when communing with her own thoughts, "if *he will* be extravagant, the more necessity is there for my being economical."

Hoskins was awakened the next morning by the sweet kisses of his boy, while his wife, leaning over his bedside, prayed that he might enjoy many happy returns of that holyday.

"Say *we*, Agnes," interrupted Edward, "say *we*. God knows, whatever happiness I enjoy, you ought to share; for I make you miserable enough at times. Will you forgive me?"

The words were spoken in the tone that Agnes so loved, and, unable to sustain her feelings, she flung herself upon her husband's bosom, and burst into tears.

When Edward, dressed in his best suit, was preparing to go to the Manor, his wife laid her hand on his arm, and, encouraged by his kindness, in the gentlest manner requested him to read one, only one, chapter to her, before he went out—it would not take him five minutes. He complied with a tolerable grace; and, when he finished, she took a small heart-shaped brooch from her bosom, and, telling him that it contained their child's hair, fastened it in his shirt.

"You did not forget, Agnes, though I did," said he; "'till I will bring you something from Mondrich, where I must go after I ' the Manor; and I will be back to dinner at two, and remain with y. ne evening."

Edward returned at the appointed time, but a cloud was on his brow; he hardly partook of the dinner she had prepared, and had forgotten the customary token. As the evening was closing over a cold and snowy landscape, "Agnes," he said, "I must go: I thought I could have spent

all this day with you, but something has occurred which must prevent it. I will, however, return early, and do more justice to your excellent cheer at supper, than I have been able to do at dinner.

Never had his wife felt it so difficult to part from him. She requested, entreated; and for a long time his child clasped its hands round his neck, and hung by his knees even as he approached the door. His departing footsteps smote heavily on the heart of the affectionate Agnes, and, as the last echo died upon her ear, she wept.

When eight o'clock came she looked from the window; but the fog was so intense that she could see nothing save the fantastic boughs of the old oak, looking more like deepened shadows of darkness than separate or distinct objects. The song and cheerful laugh rang from two of the neighbouring cottages; and at a third there was an assembly of dancing rustics. Agnes thought it was the first time the happiness of others had increased her misery, and she blamed herself for the selfish feeling. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve! — Christmas day had ended, the revellers had sought their homes, and no sound was heard save the rushing of the storm amid the branches, whose outlines were now lost in midnight obscurity. It would seem that the ancient of days sturdily withstood the tempest, and groaned heavily from the exertion; the old rooks, who had made it their habitation for ages, cawed their complainings whenever the sweeping of the mighty blast passed on, as if to remonstrate with the mysterious power that disturbed their repose. She stood at the little window, and pressed her forehead against the glass, that its coolness might be imparted to her burning brow. Suddenly she thought she perceived streaks of light, or rather (so deeply coloured were they) of flame, intersecting the darkness, and gradually illuminating the distant sky.

Before she had time to draw any conclusion from so singular an appearance, she started back with horror on observing, so close that she almost fancied it touched her cheek, a thin, shadowy hand, with the forefinger curved, as if beckoning her forward. Despite her self-possession, she trembled violently, and could hardly prevent herself from shrieking aloud, when she saw distinctly a white ghastly face pressed to the glass that separated her from this untimely visitor. A sort of hissing and exulting whisper now came upon her ear. "Do n't you know me, Agnes Hoskins? — do n't you remember Lady Jane? Come, come with me, and see how bright the Manor is this gay Christmas night!" A horrid suspicion — too horrid to be entertained — flashed across her mind, as Agnes undid the door; and, before the half-crazed girl entered, she had sunk upon a chair, and with difficulty retained her seat. For a few moments she could not think; and the half-maniac, with that feeling of sympathy which rarely deserts a woman, looked mournfully into her face. At length her eye rested on a flagon of elderberry wine that stood upon the table with the untasted supper; she poured out a large glass of it, and, curtsying with mock solemnity to the trembling Agnes, said, before she drank it off, "Health to you, my lady, and a merry Christmas! — a cellar full, a byre full, and plenty of fagots! See, see! they blaze — they blaze!" she continued, pointing to the sky, that was reddening higher and higher. "Come with me, and I'll tell you as we go how that will be the last fire Harry will light for many a day! He must have other darlings, indeed! — but now he can have only me, for none of his dainty dames will follow him into strange lands — none but poor Jane! The police have him by this time, and Hoskins too; so you'd better go and bring them all home to supper!"

"Woman!" exclaimed Agnes, springing as in mortal agony from her chair, "what do you say? — Hoskins — my Edward — my husband — there — at the burning of Wallingford Manor!" She seized the girl fiercely by

the arm, but suddenly her grasp relaxed, and she fell stiff and cold to the earth. How long she remained there she was perfectly unconscious; but, when she recovered, her frame felt paralyzed, the air was bitter and piercing, the light was extinguished, and all around was utterly, utterly desolate. It was some time ere she was restored to the recollection of what she had heard, and it was still longer before she recovered sufficiently to be able to move, or settle upon any plan of action. The very ticking of the clock — that gentle, domestic sound — struck heavily and painfully upon her brain; and, when it gave warning that another hour had passed into eternity, she could hardly believe the sense was correct which counted four. She endeavoured to compose her mind by supplication, and the Lord's Prayer occurred to her at once. She repeated the words, until she arrived at the sentence — "Deliver us from evil," when the full consciousness of the evil that was suspended over their devoted heads prevented her finishing the holy and beautiful intercession. She arose from her knees, and groped about until she procured a light. She then endeavoured to arrange her plans. Her very soul recoiled from the dreadful idea that Hoskins had anything to do at the burning which had but a little while past streaked the everlasting sky with tokens of the wickedness of man. The heavens were still as intensely black as when first she had pressed her burning brow against the small panes of the cottage-window, and looked earnestly and hopefully for him with whom her heart perpetually dwelt.

While she paused, and paused, she heard the sound of distant voices; footsteps approached — not her husband's. Her breath came short and thick, and, instead of passing from between her unclosed lips, seemed to incrust itself upon her tongue, and forbid the power of utterance. Men — strangers, entered; one she had seen — known — the sergeant of police. He respectfully removed his hat, "hoped that Mrs. Hoskins would forgive him for doing his duty." If salvation had depended on it, she could not speak; but she looked into his face with so despairing, so imploring a gaze, that the man turned from her, with more emotion than could be expected from one who had often witnessed distress in so many forms. When at last she was enabled to ask a few questions, the answers she received confirmed her worst fears. "The out-offices of Wallingford Manor had been set on fire; Hoskins, Hinton, and a pedler of the name of Paul Dodder, had been found on the spot; and," added the man, "the Manor itself must have taken fire had we not received intimation immediately after it was kindled — long before there was any appearance to indicate such rapid destruction."

The party then proceeded to search the cottage, but found nothing which they considered necessary to remove. "Matters may turn out better than you think for," said the man kindly. "Can I take any message to your husband? — it may comfort him, for he seemed sadly put out — stupefied like."

"I will go! — no — my child — I will — I must wait till morning! Tell him — my blessing — and I will be with him to-morrow. I shall find him, I suppose, in the —" jail, she would have said, but could not utter the hateful word.

The man understood her, and replied "Yes," — the monosyllable of hope, but, in this instance, the herald of despair. They then departed, and went to Hinton's dwelling, where they remained much longer. The sergeant, with real good feeling, knocked at the door of a respectable resident at Mossfits, who he knew was esteemed by Agnes — told her the circumstances — and the woman needed no farther intimation to hasten to one whom she both loved and respected.

When she entered the cottage, Agnes was weeping bitterly over her unconscious boy, who, despite her loud sobbings, slept as calmly as if the very

breath of happiness had hushed his slumbers. She extended her hand to Mrs. Lee, and said, in broken and hardly audible tones, "They will point at that innocent child when we are both dead, and call him, in bitter mockery, the orphan of the house-burner! And who has brought this bitterness upon us? Pray for me, Mrs. Lee, pray for me! — I cannot pray for myself now! Oh, that God in his mercy had left us childless, and then I might have borne it! Wicked that I am! Will he not be, perhaps, the only thing on earth left me to love, when — when —" She pressed her hands firmly on her temples, and her friend almost feared that the violence of her grief would destroy her reason. The feelings that had long been pent up within her own bosom had at last vented themselves both in words and tears, and before nine o'clock she had apparently regained much of her usual serenity. She dressed her child, who added unconsciously to her misery by perpetually inquiring for "papa," and placing a cup and chair for him before the untasted breakfast. She then summoned resolution to change her dress; and, tying a cottage-bonnet closely over her face, proceeded with a sorrowing heart towards Mondrich.

Mrs. Lee kindly took charge of the little boy; and, to do justice to the inhabitants of the cottages, not one but saluted her kindly and respectfully as she passed.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Lee, "she has borne a great deal lately; she looks now ten years older than she did this time twelvemonth."

"I am truly sorry for her," responded Miss Nancy Carter, famous for clear-starching and scandal, who had come on purpose to Moss-pits to find out, as she expressed it, "the truth of every thing." "I'm truly sorry for her; but she always carried her head very high, as if she were better than a servant, forsooth! I'm very sorry for her, for all that!"

"So you ought to be, Miss Nancy, for she sent you plenty of black-currant jelly when you had a sore throat, last winter," observed Mrs. Lee.

"Do you think poor Hoskins will get off with transportation?" persisted Nancy.

"I could never think him guilty of setting fire to Wallingford Manor, for one," replied the kind-hearted Mrs. Lee. "He was on the spot, I suppose, or they could not have taken him there; but I am certain it was to save, not to destroy."

"Well, time will tell," said the gossip, who finding that Mrs. Lee was charitably given, thought she would seek some "kindred soul" with which to communicate: "Time will tell; only what did he want with the seven fire-brands, tied in red tape, a cask of powder, and three mould candles? You may smile if you please, Mrs. Lee, but it's true, every word of it! Three mould candles, with the ends scorched, and a quarter of a pound of wax-ends! I had it from the very best authority, for I'd scorn to say anything without a good foundation!" and off walked Miss Nancy Carter.

It would be impossible to describe the feelings with which Agnes entered that abode of misery called a county jail. Snow and ice had accumulated in a little court she had to cross, to such a degree that she could hardly extricate her feet from the humid mass. As the rusty key turned in its lock, she clung to the slimy walls for support; and, when the door was thrown open, she had scarcely power to crawl into the dismal cell where her husband was confined. Hoskins sat upon a low bed, which evidently had not been discomposed, his elbows resting upon his knees, and his face buried in his hands. Agnes could not speak, but she sat down by his side, and, passing her arm round his neck, endeavoured to draw his head so as to rest it on her bosom. He shrank from the touch, and a low and bitter groan was the only reply to her caresses.

"Keep a good heart, measter," said the jailer, "keep a good heart, and

it may all go well. Bless ye! Measter Hinton does n't get on so, but has taken something to keep life in him."

No answer was returned to this consolatory speech, and the man left them, observing that they must not remain more than two hours together.

Not many, but kind and tranquillizing, were the words which this admirable woman breathed into her husband's ear. She kissed his cold and clammy hands, and tried, though in vain, to prevail upon him to taste of the refreshments she had not forgotten to bring with her. For a length of time she obtained no words from his lips; and at last she sat silently gazing on him—as the mariner who looks upon a rock close to his native home, where he sported in infancy, and formed his plans of future greatness, but which, on his return from a long and prosperous voyage, with the harbour in view, had wrecked his vessel, and consigned his all to destruction! Silence is the nurse of sorrow: Agnes would have given worlds to have heard the sound of his voice; and, when at last he did speak, its tone was so fearfully changed—so hollow, so agonized—that she could hardly believe it to be that of her own Edward.

"I deserve this, and worse, Agnes," he said, "for I have cast the blessing of the Almighty far from me. And you, who ought to curse me, to find you thus! Do not touch me, Agnes! I could bear your reproaches; but your kindness scorches my very heart. Yet, Agnes, I solemnly call God to witness, that I am innocent of any participation in the burning at Wallingford Manor. I cannot now dwell upon it; but, as you have borne much, bear yet a little more—bear with my silence: but believe me innocent of any participation in that crime. However I may be otherwise guilty—however despicable—I repeat that I had nothing to do with the burning at Wallingford."

How sweet and how natural it is to believe in the innocence of those we love! Although Agnes well remembered the fearful habit of falsehood which her husband had contracted—although he had so often deceived her—yet she clung to the belief that he was guiltless, and blessed God for it, as though it were an established fact in the eyes of those judges before whom he was shortly to appear as a fettered culprit, whose life only might appease the offended laws of his country.

"Would to God it were come—that dreaded, awful day!" she murmured, in her cottage solitude.

It was now nearly three weeks since her first interview with her husband; a slow, consuming fever had been preying upon her strength, and utterly prevented her using the smallest exertion, or crawling to his prison. The kind neighbour, Mrs. Lee, undertook to visit him daily, and to see that his wants were cared for; the little boy was often her companion.

"Thank God!" said his poor mother, kissing his rosy cheek, "thank God that he is too young to remember his father in a prison! Were he even a year older, its memory might dwell upon his mind, and wither his young spirit within him."

It was early in the month of February, and still she had been unable to reach Mondrich, although nearly every day the physician described her as growing better. The clergyman's visits afforded her much consolation, particularly as he told her how completely and truly penitent her husband was: this, with the assurance, repeated in every communication she received from him, of his perfect innocence, made her hope for the best, though how that innocence was to be proved remained a mystery.

Mrs. Lee had taken her boy out one day, earlier than usual, to see Mrs. Middleton; and, as Agnes looked forth on the clear cold morning, she fancied she felt stronger than she had been for a long time. The crisp hoarfrost hung in fantastic forms on the young shoots of the early budding trees. The robin hopped among the lower branches of the oak, and, seeing the

hand resting on the window where it had been so often fed, flew to the sill, and fearlessly pecked the crumbs she threw to her little dependant. The air, she thought, was almost fragrant; and, ere the casement was closed, she had resolved to exert her strength, and walk as far as the stile that divided the Mondrich meadows. She sat for a few moments on the step; and, urged by the eager desire again to see her husband, after a little consideration, determined to reach the town. She walked better than she anticipated: and felt much pleasure at perceiving that now but one field separated her from the turn that led directly to the prison. Suddenly she became rooted to the earth; her features assumed the rigidity and colour of death; and she cast off the bonnet which had been tied on so firmly, to catch every note of the awakening sound that passed over the town. Again! — was it a dream? — or could it be really the trumpet — the awful trumpet that heralds the approach of him who is to sit in judgment on the crimes of his fellow-beings!

"It is come! — it is come!" she exclaimed, "the day — the very hour of his trial, and they told me not of it! Father of Mercy!" — and as she spoke she sank on the ice-bound and crackling grass, and stretched forth her white attenuated arms towards heaven — "Father of Mercy, remember mercy, for the sake of thy blessed Son! Mercy! — mercy! — mercy! Lord, this cup may not pass away; but crush me not utterly in this dreadful moment! Mercy! — mercy! O my God!"

The trumpet-sound had ceased, and the bustle of the county-court subsided, when Agnes Hoskins — her mantle shrouding her entire figure, and its hood held closely round her face, glided, almost like a spectre, into a corner nearest the dock, where the three prisoners stood arraigned for trial. With tender care for the feelings of him she loved, she concealed herself effectually from his sight; knowing that it would increase his misery to see her there. To the indictment they all pleaded "not guilty;" but Edward Hoskins laid his hand on his heart, and, looking firmly in the judge's face, added, in a low impressive tone, "so help me, God!" The bearing of the unfortunate culprits was strongly contrasted: Paul Dodder's chin had sunk on his breast, and he looked down with the sullen expression of one who knew the worst was come, and cared not for it. Harry Hinton had thrown back the light and glowing curls that crowded over his brow, and his eye seemed enlarged by the bold front he carried; his features were high and regular; and the unobserving would have imagined the firmness with which he regarded, and even analyzed, the countenances of his judges, little betokened the hardness of guilt. Edward Hoskins stood as a sorrowful and heart-stricken man — ashamed of his offences, yet confident that he was not guilty of this particular crime. His suit of solemn black seemed still more dismal beside the smart blue coat and light waistcoat in which his unabashed companion was arrayed. The first person examined was the police-sergeant by whom the prisoners had been taken into custody. The counsel for the crown, who, as usual, scented the blood afar off, lost no opportunity, in his opening speech, of stating the worst, and dwelt particularly on Hoskins's ingratitude to Mrs. Cecil Wallingford; while the counsel for the prisoners seemed equally anxious to foil his brother, and, if possible, make a way for his clients to escape.

The sergeant deposed to his finding Dodder and Hinton close to the burning barn: the latter, when first he saw him, was on his knees, in the very act of blowing the flame; the other held a quantity of combustibles, (which he described,) and was laying a train to communicate with the stables. Hoskins, he said, was near the spot, but made no attempt to escape. This statement went so clear against the prisoners, that the jury looked at each other, as much as to say, "What need we of farther witness?" One of the police confirmed all that the other had stated; and at

every word they uttered Agnes felt her heart beat slowly, and still more slowly, until, at last, she scarcely breathed or lived.

"The case, my lord, against those unhappy men seems so fully made out," said the counsel for the crown, addressing the bench, "that I need hardly trouble the court with the examination of other witnesses; unless, indeed, the jury require it."

"My lord," observed the prisoners' counsel, "I particularly wish that a girl of the name of Jane Hoole be called up: much depends upon her evidence."

"My learned brother has chosen a strange person," replied the senior barrister; "I was anxious to spare the feelings of his clients; but, by all means, let Jane Hoole be brought forward."

All eyes were turned upon the wild fantastic girl who now ascended the witness-box. Her rich golden hair had been curled and arranged with much attention; her pallid cheeks were tinted by that fearful, but beautiful, hue which too truly indicates consumption, and her deep-blue eyes were of a dazzling and wandering brightness; her dress was of faded silk, and a wide red sash girdled a figure of light and elegant proportions. She seemed much terrified, and trembled violently.

"The prisoner, Hinton, intimidates our witness, my lord," observed the counsel; and a shudder passed over those who saw the expression with which he regarded the unfortunate victim of his wickedness.

"Let Henry Hinton stand down," said the judge. After a little time the poor creature seemed at ease, and collected; Agnes, who had been roused by her appearance, thought she was a much more rational being than she had imagined during their former brief meetings.

"You know the prisoners at the bar?" commenced the counsel.

"I do, sir."

After a little more questioning, the rod was presented to her, and she was directed to place it on the heads of those who were present at the burning at Wallingford Manor. With a trembling hand she let it descend on the heads of Hinton and Dodder, then held it for a moment or two suspended over Hoskins, and, after some consideration, was about to return it to the officer.

"Were only these two men present?" inquired the counsel, while a thrill and murmur of mingled quality passed through the court-house.

"Though I am only a poor half-witted creature," said the girl, looking round with an imploring air, "I want to tell the truth, which I will if you let me do it in my own way. He was there in body but not in *spirit*; do n't you see the difference? He did n't mean to be there for harm; — he was there for good. But let me go on my own way, and then you'll understand me."

She then, in wandering but simple language, stated that Harry Hinton had often employed her to procure materials for various burnings, and that she did as he desired, "for the love that warmed her heart towards him." That he often promised to marry her, but that the fancy he took to Jessy, had, she knew, prevented it; and so she thought, if he was once to be sent beyond the seas, she would follow him, and have him all her own. He always promised to give Jessy up; but she found that he had got her back from Scotland, after her sister had sent her there, and resolved to punish him for his infidelity by telling the police, which she had done; and she hoped, now she had told their lordships the truth, they would send Jessy far, far away, and make Harry marry her at once; she would go with him anywhere — that she would — for she loved him with all her heart.

A great portion of this was unintelligible to both judge and jury; but the witness evidently interested them; and though the counsel frequently interrupted her, saying that what she stated had nothing to do with the

transaction, yet they were obliged to let her go on her own way, as the only chance of getting at the truth. As to Hoskins, "he certainly was," she said, "at Wallingford, but not to burn it." It was in vain that the counsel for the crown declared that hearsay evidence should not be received; — the judge was of opinion that she ought to be permitted to go on; and the counsel for the crown resigned her to the cross-examination of the counsel for the prisoner.

"You have stated, young woman, that Edward Hoskins did not aid and abet in the burning which took place on the night of the twenty-fifth of December."

"I have, sir. I was up in the loft where they met, and when he found out what they were after, he prayed and begged them not to go on; and then my Harry made like to give it up — and Hoskins went home, as we thought, for my Harry sent me down to the Manor with the chips for the burning, and promised to come after; but, at the Manor, dark as it was, I saw Hoskins, who let himself in with a private key to the out-places, examining and looking about as if to see all safe. And I wondered what kept Harry away, and went back; and on the road I met Dodder, and a little behind I saw Harry — my Harry, talking to the girl I hated; and I made up my mind to tell that minute and bring the police to them; and, meeting one, I gave him a hint, and returned to the out-house, at Wallingford; and there was Hoskins and Harry quarrelling, and one reproached the other — and Edward Hoskins thought to put out the fire — and I was sorry when Harry struck him; and then Paul Dodder went on lighting the fire that Edward tried to put out — and was like one frantic, and Harry and him struggled hard, and came so near the spot where I was crouching, that I ran off to tell Agnes Hoskins of it, and saw the police coming — and she can tell you," continued the girl, turning round to the spot where Agnes had fancied herself perfectly concealed — "there is Mrs. Hoskins. I dare say she remembers what I said."

Edward Hoskins sprang to the side of the dock, and for a moment forgetting the propriety he had hitherto maintained, shook the bars violently, and, finding that he could not escape to her side, exclaimed, "Support, support her! — will no one look to her! — she is fainting!" But she did not faint — she approached the bar with a blanched cheek, but a step of almost supernatural firmness, and, passing her thin, cold hand through the aperture, rested her clear blue eyes upon the jury; and in a low voice, which, notwithstanding its weakness, was so earnest as to be heard in every corner of the court —

"Forgive, gentlemen," she said, "a wife's presuming to remind you that more than one life hangs upon your verdict; and —" she was interrupted by a scream, so wild and piercing, that every eye was again turned to the witness-box, from whence it came.

"There — there — there she is!" exclaimed Jane Hoole. "She has followed him even here to take him from me. But you will not let her!" She leaped down the steps, and, in an instant, before the officers had time to interpose, she had torn off a cloak and hat, in which the unfortunate Jessy Grey had endeavoured to enshroud herself; but which could not deceive her lynx-eyed rival. "Here she is, my lord! — here she is! Agnes Hoskins, I will trust her to you," she continued, dragging her forward. Agnes did not see the deceiving and degraded sister. She only beheld the child of her father's old age — the girl she had loved with a mother's tenderness, and cherished with a mother's care. Turning from the dock, she opened her arms, but Jessy fell at her feet and hid her face on the earth. It was in vain that order was endeavoured to be restored. Agnes Hoskins and her virtues were known to every individual in the court. Husbands had often pointed her out to their wives as a model of

virtue and propriety — fathers had wished for such a daughter, and young men for such a partner. And as she stood struggling with emotion, and caressing the poor lost creature, who twined around her with all the contrite feeling of an humbled sinner, the judge waited patiently till the feelings that had thus agitated every member of the assembly should subside.

"I have made one effort, Agnes, to repair my many crimes," whispered Jessy to her sister: "I have no evidence to offer in favour of *him*; but I believe I can confirm the statement just made by that unhappy girl, as to your Edward's innocence." This information was conveyed to the counsel for the prisoners; and, as the poor changed creature was about to ascend the box, Agnes threw her own cloak over her shoulders, to conceal a form that called a crimson blush to her faded cheek. Her quiet and distinct account of the transaction fully corroborated what the wild girl had sworn to. Unknown to her deceiver, she had witnessed the quarrel which took place between them on that awful night; and had wandered over the country ever since, "seeking rest but finding none" — not daring to pollute her sister's cottage with her presence, and resolved not to visit the author of her misery, lest he might alter the fixed purpose of her soul — that of appearing at her brother-in-law's trial to testify his innocence. She was supported down the steps, and clung to her sister's shoulder during the jury's deliberation. Without leaving the box they returned a verdict of guilty against Hinton and Dodder, and acquitted Edward Hoskins. Agnes might well be excused for forgetting Jessy's feelings in the overwhelming gratitude she experienced for the preservation of her husband's life. So completely were her ears closed by a new sensation of joyfulness and hope, that overflowed as it were all her senses, that she hardly understood, when the judge had absolutely pronounced sentence of death on his wretched companions, the meaning of his words. One of Jane Hoole's frightful shrieks aroused her from those visions of returning happiness which flitted around her.

"Death! — not death — not death for Harry!" vociferated the maddened creature: "it is transportation — not death! — you won't kill him!" At the same instant Agnes felt the grasp, that her sister had so firmly fixed on her arm, relax; she looked upon her — her hands were stretched towards the dock; and, as her gaze rested upon Harry Hinton's face, which was turned towards her, those beautiful eyes grew yet more dim; her livid lips parted over her white and glistening teeth; and, with a frightful convulsion, the ardent, misguided spirit of Jessy Grey passed from its earthly dwelling!

* * * * *

Months and years have gone by — the Mosspits are quiet and beautiful as ever — but the curate of the parish, a mild and benevolent young man, dwells in the cottage that had once been gladdened by the presence of the excellent Agnes. She had passed with her small household to another land, where we will for a moment follow — it is even in the New World; and there, in a well-built dwelling, on the borders of a green savannah, is the final resting-place of Edward Hoskins and his now numerous family.

The sun is setting behind the dense and magnificent woods that seem to mount even to the heavens; and its parting rays linger, as if loth to part from the richly-cultivated corn and meadow-land that surrounds his house. There, literally, under the shadow of their own vine and fig-tree, are this once more happily family assembled.

"And will you never return to England, father?" demanded the first-born, as he carefully examined the contents of a huge chest which had just arrived from Europe.

His mother replied, "Could we be happier there than we are here?"

Her husband thanked her with a look that told of gratitude unspeakable ; and when the group had separated, and only Edward and his cherished wife remained to enjoy the deep tranquillity of the balmy twilight, he disturbed the meditation, which the question had occasioned, by the utterance of a natural but painful idea. "If our children should ever go to England, Agnes, they would hear a sad story of their father ; but they would hear also of their mother's virtue: had you been unkind — had you even been what the world calls just to yourself, I should have been a banned and a blighted man, but you did —"

"Only what every woman, who truly loves her husband, would do," interrupted the unchanging Agnes. "And, behold, the Lord has been not only merciful, but bountiful ; — the treasures bestowed upon us on earth (she pointed to their children, who were assembling for evening worship within the porch) can only be exceeded by the treasures appointed for humble believers in heaven."

THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

THE TRIALS OF MARGARET SUNDERLAND.

"If Misfortune comes, she brings along
The bravest virtues. And so many great
Illustrious spirits have convers'd with wo,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate distress."

THOMPSON.

"Hush, Margaret, I see it again! Poor little thing, how it limps ! Hush! I declare it has gone through the hedge into the church-yard. Wait one, only one moment, dear sister, and I shall certainly catch it;" — and over the church-yard stile bounded Rose Sunderland, as lightly as a sunbeam, or, I should rather say, to be in keeping with the time and place, as lightly as a moonbeam ; for that favourite orb of love and ladies had risen, even while the golden hue of an autumnal sun lingered in the sky, and its pale, uncertain beams silvered the early dew-drops, which the gay and thoughtless girl shook from their verdant beds in her rapid movements. But Rose cared little about disturbing dew-drops, or indeed anything else that interfered with the pursuit which occupied her for the moment. With the eagerness of sixteen she had pursued a young wounded leveret among the silent tombs, as thoughtlessly as if she trod only on the sweet wild thyme, or humble daisy ; and when she had nearly wearied out the object of her anxiety, she saw it take shelter under the worn arch of an ancient monument with evident satisfaction, convinced that now she could secure her prize if Margaret would only come to her assistance.

"Sister, sister," repeated she eagerly, "come ; if we do not take it, it will surely become the prey of some weazel or cub-fox before morning."

Margaret slowly passed the stile.

"One would think you were pacing to a funeral," said Rose, pettishly. "If you will do nothing else, stand there at least, and — now I have it!"

exclaimed she joyously : " its little heart pants — poor thing ! I wonder how it got injured ! "

" Stop," replied her sister, in a low, agitated voice : " you forget — yet how can you forget ? — who it is that rests here ; who — ". She placed her hand upon a plain stone pedestal, but strong and increasing emotion prevented her finishing the sentence.

" My dear Margaret, forgive me ! it is ever thus. I am fated to be your misery. I am sure I never thought —."

" Think now, then, Rose, if it be but for a moment ; think — think, that only one little year has passed since he was with us ; since his voice, so wise, and yet so sweet, was the music of our cottage ; his kindness, the oil and honey of our existence. Though the arrow had entered into his soul, it festered not, for no corruption was there. When he was reviled, he reviled not again ; and though his heart was broken, his last words were, ' Lord, thy will, not mine, be done ! ' My dear, dear father," she continued, sinking at the same moment upon her knees, and clasping her hands in devout agony, " teach me to be like thee ! "

" Say me, rather," ejaculated the sobbing Rose, whose grief became as vivid as her exultation had been : " say, teach Rose to be like thee ! you are like our father ; but I am nothing ! — anything ! O, Margaret, can you forgive me ? There ; I'll let the hare go this moment ; I'll do anything you wish ; indeed I will."

" Do let it go," replied Margaret Sunderland, who had quickly recovered her self-possession ; " it would be ill done to permit any suffering near his grave."

After a brief pause, she rose from her knees, and passing her arm through that of her sister, left the church-yard to its moonlight solitude.

The widow Sunderland dwelt on the banks of the river Witham, and the path the sisters had taken led for some time along the picturesque meadows that sloped to the very water's edge. As they pursued their way, an opening amid the trees discovered the beautiful window in Lincoln cathedral — at once the pride and boast of that venerable city ; the beams of the moon were full upon it, and its varied panes glittered like many-tinted silver in the placid yet wavering light. " How beautiful ! " exclaimed Rose. Margaret sighed. " Is it not beautiful ? " interrogated the gay-hearted girl. " Yes, Rose ; but methinks I more admire those lofty towers, standing out against the clear night sky ; and looking, not like relics, but giants of the olden days. We have no right to upbraid Time in this instance ; for he,

—— ' Gentlest among the thralls
Of Destiny, upon whose wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan moon, upon the towers and walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.'

Time and man have loved those glorious towers ; and I love them better than the moon-tinted window ; for see, Rose, a cloud has veiled her brightness, and — and now my towers are as prominent as ever, while your window is obscured."

" You would draw a moral from that, my wise sister."

" It would be quaint ; and, I fear," replied Margaret, " an old song to, perhaps, not a new tune ; signifying, that much which is excellent and beautiful is lost, because of not having the advantage of a good light."

" Sister, I forgot to tell you that I met Lady Louisa Calcraft this morning at the library, and she took no notice of me. I am sure she knew me, for she said something to a gentleman who was with her, and I distinguished the words, ' dead father, and ' ruined fortunes.' "

"The ban is upon you, and upon us all, Rose," replied Margaret, turning her pale but beautiful countenance towards her sister — "The ban —

— 'Of buried hopes,
And prospects faded.'

Would to God that we were all — ! that any sacrifice on my part could pay the debts my poor father, in his honest, but wild speculations, incurred ; and then I could return the haughty stare of those who worshipped, it appears, not us, but our prosperity, and now scorn the daughters of a ruined house. The Calcrafts in Lincoln ! — but they are everywhere. I could ill have borne a scornful look from one of them."

"They are friends of Ernest Heathwood — are they not?"

A deep and glowing crimson, which luckily the obscurity of the night preserved from observation, mantled the cheeks of Margaret Sunderland, while she replied —

"Yes, I believe so ; but, dear Rose, you might have spared me the mention of his name."

"You will be more angry with me when you know that this morning I also saw Ernest, and he requested — prevailed on me to —"

"To what?"

"To take a letter to you."

Again the tell-tale blood rushed to the maiden's face, and as quickly receded, leaving her fine features pale and rigid as chiselled alabaster. It was long ere she recovered herself sufficiently to form any determination, much less arrange her words for utterance ; but the only manifestation of displeasure she evinced towards her thoughtless sister, was by withdrawing her arm, and walking resolutely forward, unaided and alone.

Enough has been doubtless gathered from this conversation, to show that Margaret and Rose were the daughters of a ruined merchant — of one, indeed, who had been a prince yesterday, and a beggar to-day — of one whose argosies had gone forth, but returned no more — whose name one year would have guaranteed millions — yet who died the next, wanting a shilling. Maurice Sunderland had cheerfully surrendered all to his creditors, yet that all was insufficient to satisfy the claims made, and justly made, upon him. House, plate, jewels, servants, had all been sacrificed. Not a vestige of their former prosperity lingered ; and they who had revelled in superfluities, now wanted the most common necessities of life. A small jointure alone remained ; and in that his wife had only a life-interest. Margaret was many years older than her sister ; and in his agony, their father wished that the grave had closed over them, as it had over his other children, before this great sorrow had come upon them.

His wife was vain, weak, selfish ; a woman who knew not what it was to grow old gracefully, and who haunted youthful pleasures with a wrinkled brow, a flaxen wig, and a painted cheek. Her mind was inconceivably small ; she wept more for the loss of her diamonds and Dresden, than for her husband's misfortunes ; and mourned incessantly that her Mino, her darling, her exquisite poodle, was of necessity deprived of his chicken panada ! Being a man of no ordinary intellectual powers, Mr. Sunderland had chosen her — no one knew why ! — from the love of contrast, perhaps ; or the then, as well as now, prevailing opinion, that silly women make the most tender wives ; or perhaps, smitten with her pretty face — time out of mind the matrimonial bait for wise men as well as fools ! But certainly no one could give her credit for being the mother of such a being as Margaret Sunderland. One little anecdote will serve to show the nature of Margaret's principles — and it is to be hoped, act as a lesson to many similarly circumstanced, who seem not aware that honesty demands the sacrifice of

all; so that, in the emphatic words of Scripture, we may "owe no man anything, but to love one another." When her father was making out an inventory of her personal property for the benefit of his creditors, Margaret entered the room with a noiseless step, and placed before him a large casket, containing all the jewels she possessed. The old man laid down the pen, and looked into her sweet face, without a word.

"These were only valuable, dear father, because you gave them, and loved to see me wear such finery; — in our future dwelling they would be worse than useless; — take them, and let them, for my sake, be appropriated to the payment of our debts."

"Not so, my child; you have nothing to do with —"

She prevented the sentence being finished by an affectionate kiss.

"I will not suffer you to say so, because it makes me as if not one with you. If you do not take them, I will sell them myself, and send the money where it may be required."

Mr. Sunderland unclosed a portion of the casket, and his eyes rested on a tiara of the finest oriental pearl. "I remember when you last wore this, my child; it was at the gallant fete given at Hampstead, by the rich Jew of Cheapside. How beautiful it looked in your dark hair."

"And does not this look as beautiful, father?" exclaimed Margaret, snatching a white rose from an overturned vase of flowers, and placing it on her head. "When we live in a nice country cottage, you shall gather one for me every summer morning."

"But the winter — the winter will come there, girl, as well as here, and where then shall I gather roses?"

"We will then, father, live upon memory — and upon hope!" She hardly dared trust herself to pronounce that little word *hope*, which, to a really broken heart, sounds more like mockery than consolation. Her father looked mournfully into her face, and shook his head in bitter silence; he then reclosed the casket, and would have placed it in her hands.

"They are the only portion left you, Margaret."

"Not so, father; they would take a portion from me."

"How, child?"

"An honest conscience! I cannot keep them; they were bought with your money for the daughter of the rich — they would not, dearest father, become the daughter of a poor man. All I ask is, permission to imitate your example — You give up all: Oh! suffer me to do the same, and do not suppose so meanly of your own girl, as that she valued these more than that self-approbation, whose silent voice is sweeter than the applause of courts or kings."

Maurice Sunderland was neither a harsh man nor a stern father; he had loved and admired his daughter, but he had never known her till that moment. He made no reply to her words, but folded her silently to his breast; and she felt tears — the first she had ever known him shed — falling upon her brow.

These misfortunes may be considered the commencement of Margaret's trials. The family removed to Lincoln, as one or two relatives lived there, who could forward the plans Miss Sunderland had formed for their support. Her affection for her father would not permit her to leave him to the care of a giddy, childish sister, and her almost idiotic mother; particularly as his health was visibly sinking, and nature appeared unable to repair the inroads of disease. She, therefore, accepted most joyfully the charge of the education of four little girls, her cousins, who were to remain with her only during the day, as their parents resided in the good city of Lincoln. Her father raised no obstacle to this plan; though his withered cheek flushed, and his hand trembled, the first day that he saw his beautiful Margaret quietly arranging and superintending her *élèves* in the back parlour of their

cottage, which she had converted into a school-room ; but her mother's caprice and spirit of contradiction was a constant source of mortification, although it tended still more to draw forth her daughter's virtues : she was never satisfied ; always regretting their past splendour — always reproaching poor Margaret with having degraded her family, by condescending to become a "schoolmistress ;" and yet thoughtlessly squandering her hard earnings on selfish enjoyments. This was not all ; — no one who has only read of "The delightful task of teaching the young idea how to shoot," can form any estimate of the self-denial which must be the portion of an instructress, particularly if she be conscientious in the discharge of her duty. All influences, to be useful, must be exercised with discretion ; and it is but one little step from dominion to tyranny. Margaret was, therefore, obliged to practise as well as preach ; and, indeed, one without the other is always unavailing ; she had to watch, not only herself, but others, so that her maxims might be really useful to those she sought, to improve. She wished to make them not only accomplished, but informed ; and her "new system," as it was called, was subject to many animadversions, both from her relatives and their friends ; who, as usual on such occasions, quite forgot what Miss Sunderland *had been*, in what she was ; treated her merely as "the governess," and admitted her only as such to their houses.

Of all those doomed by the wavering scale of fortune to earn their own bread, none are so much to be felt for as governesses. The servant, when her work is done, has an hour or two that she can call her own, and she has no ambition beyond her sphere. But the governess has no sphere — she is considered — part of the kitchen — part of the drawing-room ; — from the latter she is often expelled, and from the former she turns with disgust. She struggles between a double existence ; she is a sort of amphibious creation, belonging to two separate states. She must appear like a gentlewoman, while she hardly receives the wages of a lady's maid ; she must be "accomplished and refined," yet keep her accomplishments out of the way till called for ; and support insult, as if she were devoid of feeling. Heaven help those who are obliged to go a "governessing," for they can expect but little help from earth ! — Volumes might be filled by "The Trials" of "a Governess."

At one of those visits, which she continually shrank from, and only endured as an occasional penance, she met the very Ernest Heathwood, to whom Rose so unwittingly alluded during their evening walk. The eldest son of a baronet, who, with his new honours, had changed, it was understood, a mercantile for a somewhat aristocratic name, was a likely person to attract the attention, and win the civilities, of all within his circle ; and he was welcomed to the mansion of one of Miss Sunderland's relatives with extraordinary courtesy. Margaret, always collected, always dignified, sought neither to attract nor avoid his attentions ; but silently suffered all the little manœuvres of second-rate, country-town society, to take their course. The anxiety that some mothers evinced to crowd a tribe of ill-dressed daughters to a tuneless piano, and there show off their skill in the various departments of first, second, and third harmony ; while others contented themselves with exhibiting the more quiet, and, consequently, more endurable litter, of card drawings and Poonah painting, could only excite a feeling of pity in such a mind as Margaret's. Pity, that woman should so thoroughly mistake the end and aim of her creation, as to descend to be the mistress of a puppet-show — and herself enact first puppet ; and something more severe than pity towards the other sex, who outwardly encourage, while they inwardly despise, such petty traps of slavery. "An age," reflected Margaret, "which values itself on caricature, parody, or burlesque, can produce little that is sublime, either in genius or virtue ; yet those qualities, and the display of imperfect, and, in nine cases out of ten, more senseless accom-

ishments, amuse: and we live in an age that must be *amused*, though our best and noblest feelings pay the penalty;" and she employed her slender fingers with ten-fold care, to build up the card-castle, which her little pupil, Cicely, had thrown down.

"It is abominable," whispered her sister, who that evening had accompanied her, "to hear such bad music, while *you* could give us so much that is good." A quiet motion of her sister's finger to her lips prevented farther observation; and the card-castle bid fair to mount three stories high, when, suddenly, Ernest Heathwood turned round, and, addressing himself to the fair architect, asked if now she would favour them, for he was sure she could. "Oh, yes," observed one of the dowagers; "of course, Miss Sunderland *can* and *will*; she *teaches* so well, that she must be a proficient." Some feeling of pride, perhaps, (for it will linger, despite our better judgment,) called so exquisite a blush to Margaret's cheek, and young Heathwood gazed on her with such respectful, yet visible admiration, that, were she not "only a governess," the entire female sex, likely to be married or given in marriage, would have thrown up the game as hopeless; but the eldest son of a rich baronet would never think of the daughter of a broken merchant — *and a governess!* the thing was impossible — quite.

What Ernest Heathwood did think while Margaret commenced that sweet ballad of Moore's, "All that's bright must fade," it is impossible to say; but a thrill, amounting to anguish, was felt by every one in the room, by the peculiar manner in which she pronounced the following lines, as if they were the pure echo, the true feeling of the sweet Indian melody: —

"Who would seek or prize
Delights that end in aching?
Who would trust to ties
That every hour are breaking?"

Then it was that Ernest Heathwood saw into her very soul, and felt that she must indeed have known change and misfortune.

Music is dangerous from lips of beauty, but more dangerous from those of feeling: the union of both was too much for Ernest's philosophy; and he was, it must be confessed, somewhat bewildered during the remainder of the evening. She inspired him not only with interest, but admiration; and he felt more anxiety than he cared to express, when her history was truly, though, it appeared to him, coldly communicated by her relative, the next day, with the additional intelligence, that her father had been seized only that morning with the paralysis, and that little hopes were entertained of his recovery! He called constantly at the cottage; but it was not until some time after the bereavement, which Margaret, above all, lamented, that he saw again the being for whom he had more interest than ever.

There are peculiar circumstances which train our susceptibilities to receive impressions, and misfortune either softens or hardens the heart: the incapacity of her mother, the volatility of her sister, rendered them both unfit companions for the high-minded Margaret; and she might well be pardoned for anticipating the evening that now invariably brought Ernest to the cottage, as the time when, free from toil and restraint, she would meet the sympathy and tenderness, without which a woman's heart must be sad and unsatisfied. She was not, like many other wise and prudent people, at all aware of the danger of her position. She had no idea, that while seeking to alleviate or dispel sorrow, by what she termed friendly converse, a deep and lasting feeling was silently, but surely, implanting itself in her bosom, and that time and opportunity were fostering it, either for her happiness or misery. Her girlhood had passed without any of what we call the frippery of love. How she had escaped the contagion of flirtation, is

wonderful ! Perhaps it might be attributed to a certain reserve of manner, which served as a beacon to fools and puppies, to warn them off whenever it was their fortune to encounter Margaret Sunderland.

Among the wealthy citizens many had sought her hand ; but she was not to be courted by a golden shower ; and after her father's failure, none remembered the beautiful daughter of the unfortunate merchant : it was, therefore, not to be wondered at, that she valued him who valued her for herself, and herself only — and dreamed the dream that can be dreamed but once.

Many evenings were spent in that full and perfect trustfulness, which pure and virtuous hearts alone experience. So certain indeed appeared the prospect of her happiness, that she sometimes doubted its reality ; and when a doubt as to the future did arise, it pressed so heavily, so very heavily upon her heart, that, with a gasping eagerness which excited her own astonishment, she cast it from her, as a burden too much for her to bear.

She had known and loved Ernest for some months, when one morning their only servant interrupted her little school, by saying, that a gentleman in the parlour wished to speak to her. On entering the room, a short, dark, elderly man returned her graceful salutation, with an uncouth effort at ease and self-possession.

"Miss Sunderland, I presume."

She bowed ; a long pause succeeded, which neither seemed willing to interrupt ; and when Margaret raised her eyes to his, there was something — she could hardly tell what — that made her think him the bearer of evil tidings. Yet was the countenance not displeasing to look upon — the expanded and somewhat elevated brow — the round full eye, that had rather a benign than stern expression, would have betokened a kind, and even gentle being, had not the lower portion of the face boded heaviness and severity — the mouth was thin and compressed — the chin lean and short — the nose looked as if nature had at first intended to mould it according to the most approved of Grecian features, but suddenly changing her plan, left it snubbed and stunted at the end — a rude piece of unfinished workmanship.

"Madam," he at last commenced ; "you are, I believe acquainted with my son."

"Sir !"

"My son, Mr. Ernest Heathwood ?"

Again Margaret replied by bowing.

"I have resided many years abroad, but if your father was living he would know me well."

The word "father" was ever a talisman to poor Margaret, and she looked into his face, as if imploring him to state how he had known her parent. He evidently did not understand the appeal ; and continued, in a constrained manner, his lips compressed, so as scarcely to permit egress to his words, and his eyes bent on the carpet, unwilling to meet her now fixed and anxious gaze.

"I have every respect for you, Miss Sunderland ; and yet I feel it but right to mention in time, that a union between you and my son, is what I never could — never will agree to. The title" (and the new baronet drew up his little person with much dignity) "I cannot prevent his having, but a shilling of my money goes not with it, unless he marries with my perfect consent. Forgive me, young lady, I esteem your character ; I — I —" he raised his eyes, and the death-like hue of Margaret's features seemed, for the first time, to give him the idea that he spoke to a being endowed with feeling.

"Miss Sunderland, I was not prepared for this. I had hoped matters had not gone so far. I — then you really love Ernest ?"

"Whatever my sentiments, sir, may be towards your son," she replied

— all the proud woman roused within her — “I would never entail beggary on him.”

“Well spoken, faith; and I am sure, Miss Sunderland, that had you — in short, you must be aware this is a very delicate subject; but had you fortune equal to my hopes for Ernest, I would prefer you — upon my word I would — though I never saw you till this moment, to any woman in England. You see,” he persisted, assuming the tone of low-bred confidence; “I have, as a mercantile man, had many losses; perhaps you know that?” He paused for a reply, which Margaret could not give. “These losses must be repaired, and there is only one way to do so. If I had not the station to support which I have, it would not signify; but as a man of title, the truth is, I require, and must have, ten or twenty thousand pounds within a very little time — there is but one way to obtain it — you would not —” (and here the man of wealth and the man of rank forgot himself in the husband and the father) “you would not, I am sure, by persisting in this love affair, entail ruin upon me and mine. Ernest has two sisters and a mother, Miss Sunderland.”

Margaret's breath came short and quick, the room reeled round, and, as she endeavoured to move to open the window, she must have fallen, but for the support which Sir Thomas Heathwood afforded her.”

“I will never bring ruin on any one,” she said at last. — “What is it you require of me?”

“To write and reject, fully and entirely, my son's addresses, and never, never see him more.”

“This, sir, I cannot; I will see him once more, for the last time, this evening. I will practise no deceit, but I will tell him what is necessary. There, sir, you have my word, and may the Almighty ever preserve you and yours from the bitterness of poverty!”

Well might the old baronet dread the effects of another interview between Margaret and his son, when he himself experienced such a sensation of awe and love towards this self-denying girl; yet such was the holy truth of her resolve, that he had not the power to dispute it. He left the cottage, after various awkward attempts to give utterance to his contending feelings.

“Margaret!” screamed her mother, as she was passing to her own room: “do, Margaret, just come here and see how well — how young I look without my widow's cap — a conceit of my own, this trimming — when you are married to Ernest, I shall dress in white. I should like to know what sort of a man his father is, and if he is likely to live long or die soon: dear Margaret,” added the poor woman, in all the pure vulgarity of mind, “I should so like to hear a child of mine called ‘my lady!’” This was too much for her poor daughter, who rushed into her little chamber, and burying her face in her hands, yielded to emotions which, for a time, were too powerful to submit to the control of reason.

The evening of that eventful day was clear and balmy; the flowers of early spring disseminated their fragrance over every little weed and blade of grass, till they were all impregnated with a most sweet odour: the few insects which the April sun calls into existence, clung wearily to the young tendrils for support, and the oak-leaves of the past autumn still rustled beneath the tread of the creeping hedge-hog or swift-footed hare. It was a tranquil hour, and Margaret Sunderland repined at its tranquillity. “I could have better parted from him in storm and tempest, than amid such a scene as this,” she said, as she leaned against a gnarled trunk of a withered beech-tree for support. The next moment Ernest was at her side.

“And thus, to please the avarice of my father, Margaret, you cast me off for ever — you turn me adrift — you consent to my union with another, though you have often said, that the union, unhallowed by affection, was indeed unholy. — Is this consistent?”

"I come not here to reason, but to part from you; to say, Ernest Heathwood, what I never said before; that so true is my affection for you, that I will kneel to my Maker, and fervently and earnestly implore Him to bless you, to bless your bride, to multiply happiness and prosperity to your house, and to increase exceedingly your riches and good name."

"Riches!" repeated her lover (like all lovers) contemptuously; "with you I should not need them."

"But your family; you can save them from the misery of poverty — from the plague spot, that marks, and blights, and curses, all whom it approaches. I should have mentioned," she added, with unwonted asperity, "that it rested upon us, and not have suffered you to be contaminated by its influence."

Many were the words he used, and the reasons he urged, to shake what he called her mad resolve. He appealed to her affections, but they were too strongly enlisted on the side of duty to heed his arguments; and after some reproaches on the score of caprice and inconsistency, which she bore with more patience than women so circumstanced generally possess, he left her under feelings of strong excitement and displeasure. He had not given himself time to consider the sacrifice she made; he felt as if she deserted him from a feeling of overstrained pride; and bitterly hinted, (though he knew it to be untrue at the time,) that it might be she had suddenly formed some other attachment. When she found herself indeed alone, in the dim twilight, at their old trysting spot — though while he was present she had repelled the last charge with true womanly contempt — she would fain have recalled him to reiterate her blessing, and assure him, that though her resolve was unchangeable, she loved him with a pure and unsullied faith. Had he turned on his path, he would have seen her waving him back; and the tears that deluged her pale cheeks would have told him but too truly of the suppressed agony she had endured.

Many weeks elapsed, and she had outwardly recovered her tranquillity, though she was but ill-fitted to go through her daily labours as before, when Rose so unexpectedly announced that she had seen Ernest, and taken a letter from him. When the sisters entered the little cottage, it was evident that something was necessary to dispel Mrs. Sunderland's ill temper.

"Yes, it's a pretty little thing; what loves of eyes it has, and such nice long ears! But really, Margaret, you must not go out and leave me at home without a sixpence: there was no silver in your purse, and the post-boy came here, and refused to leave a London letter without the money; — it is astonishing how impudent those fellows are — and so —"

Margaret interrupted her mother, by saying that she left ten or twelve shillings in her purse.

"Ay — very true — so you did; but a woman called with such an assortment of sweet collars, and it is so seldom I have an opportunity now of treating myself to any little bit of dress, that I used them; it was so cheap, only eleven and sixpence, with so lovely a border of double-hem stitch, and the corners worked in the most delicate bunches of fusia — here it is."

"And did the letter really go back, Mother?"

"I wish you would not call me *Mother*; it is so vulgar! every one says Mamma, even married women. No, it did not go back; I sent Mary into the little grocer's to borrow half-a-crown. You need not get so red, child: I said you were out — had my purse — and would repay it to-morrow morning.

Degradation on degradation, thought poor Margaret, as she took the letter: — "I cannot repay it to-morrow; that was the last silver in the house; — I know not where to get a shilling till next week."

"I must say, Margaret, for a young woman, you are the least commu-

nicative person I ever met; you have got that letter by heart by this time, I should imagine: pray, who is it from?"

Margaret Sunderland seemed perfectly unconscious of the question, but continued the perusal of her epistle, as if her mother had not spoken; she then left the room without uttering a single word.

"I must say, Rose, that your sister gives me a great deal of uneasiness," said Mrs. Sunderland; "she is so unlike me in all things — so self-willed — so like your poor father, who, indeed, always made her his companion. She wants tenderness and —"

"Oh! my dear mamma!" exclaimed the generous, thoughtless Rose, "you cannot think *that*, I am sure. If you only knew what a sacrifice she made to-night to catch you that little hare; — and, as to her purse, I know that the reason she changed colour was, that it contained all the money in the house."

"Then she ought to manage better; I never used to be without money in London; it is very odd —" and so ran on this inconsiderate lady, until the heart of her youngest-born ached within her, from perfect weariness, and shame at her selfishness.

"Rose," said Margaret, as the former entered their bed-room, "come hither; you may, perhaps, see Ernest Heathwood again, and you can then return him this;" — she placed the unopened letter in her hand; — "I do not wish to read it, particularly now; it might have a baneful effect upon the honest purpose which, I trust in God, I shall have strength to accomplish. And now, dearest, sit here, and look over this other letter I have received from London."

Rose took the paper that Margaret offered, and moved from opposite the cracked looking-glass which garnished the simple dressing-table.

"I'll stand here, please, sister; I cannot bear to sit opposite that disagreeable trumpery glass; it makes my nose crooked. Oh! Maggy, do you remember the beautiful mirrors we had in Bedford Square, and my pretty little bed, with its pale pink silk curtains looped with roses? Heigho! I did not know what a patched quilt meant then;" and she glanced contemptuously at the clean but humble coverlet of their simple couch.

"My dear Rose, do be serious, and read."

"What an ungenteel-looking letter! — such coarse paper, and such a scribbely-scrabbely hand!" Whatever the hand or paper might be, after she had fairly commenced, she did not again speak until she had finished the perusal from beginning to end, and then, with one loud cry of joy, she threw herself into her sister's arms.

"Margaret, dear Margaret — to think of your taking this so quietly, when I — my dear sister, I shall certainly lose my senses. We shall be rich, more rich than ever; and you can marry Ernest — dear, kind Ernest — and we can live in London, and keep our carriage, and — Nay, sister, do let me break that odious glass. Oh! Margaret, I am so happy! let us go tell our mother — *mamma* — I beg her pardon; and you shall give up your pupils: — dear, beautiful letter! let me read it again;" and the second perusal threw her into greater raptures than the first.

"It is better *not* to mention this to our mother, I think," said Margaret, when her sister's ecstasies had in some degree subsided. "And yet she is our parent, and has therefore a right to our confidence, though I know she will endeavour to thwart my resolves."

"Thwart your resolves!" replied Rose, in astonishment: "why, what resolves can you have, except to marry Ernest, and be as happy as the day is long?"

"I shall never marry Ernest Heathwood," replied her sister, in a trembling voice, "though I certainly shall be more happy than I ever anticipated in this world."

"I cannot pretend to understand you," said Rose; "but do let me go and make mamma acquainted with our unlooked-for prosperity;" and she accordingly explained to her mother, that a brother of her father's, one who had ever been on decidedly bad terms with all his relatives, and *their* family more particularly, died lately in Calcutta, bequeathing by will his property, amounting to many thousands, to his eldest niece, Margaret Sunderland, who, in the words of his singular testament, "had never offended him by word or deed, and must ever be considered a credit to her sex." There is no necessity to recapitulate the ecstasies, plans, and arrangements that succeeded, and in which Margaret took no part.

The next morning she granted her pupils a holyday, and when her mother went out, doubtless for the purpose of propagating the account of their good fortune, Margaret told her sister that she wished to be alone for some time to arrange her plans. She had been so occupied for about two hours, when Rose Sunderland, accompanied by a gentleman, passed the beechen-tree where Margaret and her lover had last met.

"I am sure she will not be angry—it will be an agreeable surprise—and mamma won't be home for a long time yet," said Rose; "I will open the parlour door, and—"

"There I shall find her forming plans for future happiness, in which, perhaps, I am not included," interrupted Ernest Heathwood.

"You are unjust, sir," replied Rose, as they entered the cottage; and in another instant Margaret, with a flushed cheek and a burning brow, had returned the salutation of him she loved. There was more coldness in her manner than he deemed necessary, and, with the impetuosity of a high and ardent spirit, he asked her if she attributed his visit to interested motives.

"No," she replied, "not so; I hold myself incapable of such feelings, and why should I attribute them to you? I tell you now, as I told you when last we met, that my constant prayer is, that God might exceedingly bless you and yours, and save you from poverty, which, in the world's eye, is the extremity of sin."

"But, Margaret," interrupted Rose, as was her wont, "there is no fear of poverty now; and Sir Thomas himself said, that, with even a moderate fortune, he should prefer you to other women."

"I have not even a moderate fortune," replied the noble-minded girl, rising from her seat, and at the same time laying her hand on a pile of account-books that she had been examining. "You, Mr. Heathwood, will understand me, if I say that, when I first breathed the air of existence, I became a partaker of my family's fortunes, as they might be, for good or evil."

"And you shared in both, Margaret, and supported both with dignity," said Ernest, eagerly.

"I believe you think so, and I thank you," she replied, while the flush of gratified feeling passed over her fine features. "And now, bear with me for a little, while I explain my future intentions. My poor father's unfortunate failure worked misery for many who trusted in him with a confidence which he deserved, and yet betrayed. I meant not that," she added, hastily, "he did not betray;—but the waves, the winds, and the misfortunes or ill principles of others, conspired against him, and he fell, overwhelmed with his own and others' ruin. Lips that before had blessed, now cursed him they had so fatally trusted, and every curse seemed to accumulate sufferings which only I was witness to. To the very uttermost—even the ring from his finger—he gave cheerfully to his creditors; there was no reserve on his part—all, all was sacrificed. Yet, like the daughters of the horse-leech, the cry was still, 'Give! give!' and," she added, with trembling voice, "at last he did give—even his existence! and I, who knew so well the honour of his noble nature, at the very time when his cold corpse lingered in the house,—because I lacked the means of

decent burial, — was doomed to receive letters, and hear complaints of his injustice. In the silent hour of night I knelt by his coffin; decay had been merciful; it spared his features to the last; and I could count and kiss the furrows which disappointment, and the scorning of a selfish world, had graven on his brow: — but, oh! how perfectly did I feel, in that melancholy hour, that his spirit was indeed departed, and that my lips rested on naught but cold and senseless clay; yet I clung, with almost childish infatuation, to the dwelling it had so sweetly inhabited for such a length of years. The hours rolled on, and the gray mists of morning found me in the same spot; it was then; as the light mingled with and overcame the departing darkness, that I entered into a compact with the living spirit of my dead father, that, as long as I possessed power to think or act, I would entirely devote my energies to the fulfilment of those engagements, which his necessities compelled him to leave unsatisfied. I am ashamed to say, I nearly forgot my promise; and though a portion of my hard earnings were regularly devoted to the darling prospect of winning back for my father his unspotted reputation, yet I did form plans of happiness in which his memory had no share. Ernest, for this I have suffered, and must suffer more. I have gone over these books, and find that, after devoting the entire of the many, many thousands now my own to the cherished object, only a few hundreds may remain at my disposal. This is enough — again I say, may you be happy with your dowered bride, and remember that the one consolation — the only one that can support me under this separation is — that I have done my duty.”

Strange as it may seem, young Heathwood did not appear as much distressed at this resolution as Rose — or, to say the truth, as Margaret — thought he would have been. No matter how heroic, how disinterested the feeling which compels a woman to resign her lover; she naturally expects that the lover will evince a proper quantity of despair at the circumstance: and certainly, Ernest, after a pause of a few minutes, during which time he seemed more affected by Margaret's noble-mindedness than his own bereavement, entered cordially into her views, and praised the sacrifice (if, with her feelings, so it might be called) with an energy that left no room to doubt its sincerity.

After his departure she pondered these things in her heart, and came to the conclusion, that she had resigned her affections too soon, for that it was evident he had pretty well succeeded in banishing her from his love; and poor Rose, who had in so little time been twice disappointed in her hopes both of a fortune and a wedding, was reproved with some asperity for conducting Ernest Heathwood, under any circumstances, to their cottage. It is needless to add, that her mother's tears and remonstrances had no effect upon Margaret's purpose; and her lawyer received instructions to remit forthwith to all the creditors of the late Maurice Sunderland the full amount of all their demands, with the interest due thereon from the day of his failure!

It required all her firmness to bear up against her mother's complainings; and, above all, against the painful truth established in her mind, that Ernest had ceased to regard her with anything bordering on affection. Strange, that at the very moment we are endeavouring to repress the unavailing passion of the one we love, we secretly — unknowingly, it may be — hope for its continuance! Not that Margaret would have ever swerved from her noble purpose; but she could not support the idea, that she was no longer thought of. And he had left her too, without the sort of farewell she felt she had deserved.

All “business affairs” were arranged according to her desire; but she was fast sinking under the outward tranquillity which, under such circumstances, is more fatal than exertion. Listlessly she wandered amidst the

flowers which Rose loved to cultivate, when the unusual sound of carriage-wheels roused her attention, and, with no ordinary emotion, she saw Sir Thomas and Ernest Heathwood enter the wicket gate, and take the path leading to the cottage.

"I told you, Miss Sunderland," commenced the old gentleman, with more agitation, but less embarrassment, than he had shown at their former interview, "that I had need of twenty thousand pounds to support my credit, and save my family from distress. I told you, that I wished my son to marry a lady possessed of that sum, and I now come to claim you as his bride."

"Sir!"

"Yes, Madam: I was your father's largest creditor; and though I had no fraud, nothing dishonourable to allege against him, yet I did not, I confess it, like the idea of my son's being united to his daughter. He was always speculative and imaginative, and I feared that you might be the same. The sum you have so nobly repaid me, I looked upon as lost, and you must therefore suffer me to consider it a marriage portion; it has saved me from ruin, without the sacrifice of my son's happiness."

"How is this?" exclaimed Margaret, fearful of trusting the evidence of her own senses; "I cannot understand — the name —"

"Our original name was Simmons," exclaimed Ernest, eagerly; "but knowing all the circumstances — I never told you — I knew how my father would feel at your disinterested conduct; and now that your trials are past, you will, I trust, no longer doubt me."

"Who said I doubted?" inquired Margaret.

"Even the pretty Rose; and here she comes to answer for her apostacy."

"Nay, dearest sister," exclaimed the laughing girl, "it was only last evening that I saw Ernest, and I have kept out of your way ever since, lest I should discover my own secret. Without my frivolity, and the thoughtlessness of another, who, for all that, is dear to us both, Margaret's virtues would never have shone with so dazzling yet steady a light."

"True, Rose, spoken like an angel; I never thought you wise before; it is to be hoped that when your sister changes her name, her mantle may descend upon you," said Ernest.

"I think she had better share it with you; and I only hope that Margaret — She may want it for herself," she continued, archly; "who knows but the most bitter trials of Margaret Sunderland may come after marriage?"

Ernest did not reply to the unjust suspicion, for he had not heard it; his sense, his thought, his heart, were fixed only upon her who had thrown so bright and cheering a lustre over that truth, usually so dark, even in its grandeur: — "The good things that belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired."

CHAPTER IV.

LOST BEAUTY.

THE TRIALS OF LADY LESLIE.

Claude. And is it nothing but a dialogue?

Mudy. In truth, no more; except that to the end

A little tale is fastened.

Claude. To pin morality to?

Mudy. No, sir. To help morality to mount still higher.

OLD PLAY.

IN the saloon of a large and antique house, of the Elizabethan era, two ladies were seated, enjoying the cool evening breeze that entered through an open window. The dwelling had been altered and realtered, to meet the tastes and improvements of the various masters into whose hands it had passed from century to century. - Here and there fragments of turrets were propped up by modern buttresses, the modern and the antique appearing in perfect contrast; one beautiful arch still marked the old entrance-gate. The former strength of the place was intimated by the remains of a moat, now nearly filled with rubbish and portions of broken and mouldering stone, from which the flaunting wall-flower, and various creeping plants, sprang up, and mocked at the decay — which, alas, poor blossoms! was soon to render them far more contemptible than that over which they triumphed. The windows of Leslie Abbey — for so was the dwelling called — were of every order, and every size — from the small loop-holes to the spacious and modern French casements, that led out upon a lawn of matchless colour and beauty.

It was near one of these the ladies were seated: and if we do not longer descant upon the richness and variety of the landscape, the extent of the wood, whose dark girdle of mingled oak and platanas clasped the green meadows, and shadowed the river that wandered and murmured beneath its protecting foliage, it is because we admire the living more than the material world, and would make acquaintance with that noble-looking woman whose countenance is turned towards the setting sun, and whose every attitude expresses dignity. How firmly, yet how gracefully, her head is raised above her polished shoulders! What richness, yet propriety, in her dress! — the folds of her velvet robe descend to her feet, that — so delicate are their form — hardly indent the crimson cushion with their slight pressure. Her companion is of other, though, it may be, of more winning beauty. The childish golden hair, that clusters over her expansive brow in such redundancy of freedom, harmonizes well with the cheek of palest rose, and a form that, we could imagine, might rest upon a bed of violets without crushing a single petal.

Her voice is like the breathing of a soft lyre, when awakened by the spirit of joy; her blue eyes are full of hope — that perfectly unsaddened hope, which dwells with youth as a companion, and calls innocence its sister.

They are both children of the same parents, though many years passed before Annette was born, to be the playmate and friend of the stately Lady Leslie.

As they sat together in that great chamber, there was a feeling of quiet and solitude around them which darkened the shadows on Lady Leslie's mind, and sobered the smile on the lip of her gay young sister. They had both recently suffered from that fell disease which has been the bane of so much beauty. But, while Annette escaped unscathed, the blight had fallen upon her sister, and the mistress of Leslie Abbey arose from her bed with the marks of the pestilence written on her once beautiful countenance too strongly to be ever effaced.

It is not to be denied that the noble lady had as large a portion of personal vanity as usually falls to the lot of woman. Of high birth, and large possessions, she had consequently a sufficient number of flatterers to praise and fawn. Had she been as dark as Erebus, and as deformed as sin, they would still have sung of and praised her loveliness. But its character and brilliancy had been such that she could not move without receiving the homage of eyes — so rarely paid without being sensibly felt and duly appreciated. She had been feted and sung, painted and sculptured, until her exquisite head whirled upon its pedestal, and, what was still worse, her heart, naturally kind and benevolent, became careless of the wants or wishes of her fellow-creatures. Prosperity drives pity from the bosoms of the wealthy: it is good to feel disappointment, and even adversity, at some period of our lives; for practical experience is a benefit to ourselves and others. It was Lady Leslie's beauty that steelled her heart; she thought of it — acted upon it — dreamed of it. It had gained her the affections of the only man she ever loved. One whom wealth and title could not purchase was nevertheless caught by the matchless face — that now! — but she could not bear to think of it. To look upon it a second time, thus scarred and disfigured, was impossible! Her husband had been abroad; and the letter, which lay open on her lap, told of his hopes of an immediate return; and spoke much of anticipated happiness in meeting again (so ran the words) "with his bright and beautiful wife."

Annette had watched, with all the earnestness and anxiety of her affectionate nature, the effect produced by the perusal of that letter upon her sister's mind. She had longed for the return of her brother; for she felt that now was the time, when Lady Leslie's proud spirit was bowed by mortification, to lead her from the vanity of her ways, and teach her to mount far, far above the world's mean and sordid enjoyments. "Why should such as she," thought Annette, "trifle away the essence and energy of soul, that God has given her, upon those whose wonder is cankered by envy — and to whose lips blessings are unknown! Her heart is touched and softened by affliction; she valued the casket more than the jewel it contained — for she lived among those who could appreciate the first, but not the last; the roses of her cheek were more lovely in her sight than the blossoms of her mind, that would have furnished forth such glorious fruit, had the one been cultivated with half the care bestowed upon the other. But it is not too late; she is yet in the summer of her days; and who knows that if Leslie comes not, it may be given to me — to me, her youngest and unworthy sister — to show her better things. When the old Roman soldier was blind, he was led by a stripling boy — as one child would lead another: not that the old man was less wise than before, but he wanted sight, and the youth lent him the only faculty he lacked. On the same principle, may not I give unto her, who is ten times greater than myself, the one quality she needs, — the only one that I possess, and so render her loss a gain?" Having thought so much, Annette looked into Lady Leslie's face; it retained the traces of recent tears, and was more than usually pale. "I

will not speak yet," thought her sister; and, without saying a word, she took her lute, and, striking a few wild chords, began that beautiful song of the witty and accomplished Carew:—

"He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires—
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away."

She paused, for a moment, at the conclusion of the first verse, and stole a quiet glance at her companion; but there was no expression that could induce her either to continue or forbear another stanza. She again sung:—

"But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combin'd,
Kindle never-dying fires;
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes."

"You are fond of the lays of the olden time," said Lady Leslie with a sigh; "but I care not for either the modern or the ancient rhymesters; why should I care for anything, when nothing cares for me?"

"If you care for nothing, dear sister, that same nothing shows marvellous wisdom in caring for you. I wish I could imitate it! But will you not read me Leslie's letter?" she continued; "or at least, tell me what he says? Here have I sat, the perfect picture of maidenly patience, singing and sighing, from fair curiosity to know what writes my lordly brother."

"O, you may see it all!—but stay, I will read you this passage myself!—

"Since you have so long enriched the abbey with your presence, I fear I can hardly hope you will continue there after my return; tell me, dearest, do you not pant for the court, of which your beauty was so bright an ornament?"

"You hear, Annette," continued the proud lady, rising from her seat, and pacing the apartment with the grace of a Mary, and the irritation of an Elizabeth: "You hear!—Did he know of the evil I have suffered, it would be ill talking of beauty; perhaps he would not think of returning."

"And have you not told him, then?"

"Told him, Annette! Oh, no, silly girl! Do you think I did not want to see him once more! Him I have so loved!—But your childish nature cannot understand such love: you love linnets, and doves, and wild roses, and —"

"You, sister!"

"Forgive me, Annette, forgive me!" said Lady Leslie, with one of those sudden transitions of temper to which petted men, women, and children are so often subject: "some allowance would be made for a king who had lost his crown—for a —"

"You have not lost your crown. It is now my turn to be forgiven, for again interrupting you. I have read of a virtuous woman being a crown of glory to her husband; and do you know what I fancy should be a married woman's crown?—Her husband's love."

"Granted; my husband's love was what I prized on earth—more than earth's—all earth's other treasures:—it is for him I would be beautiful!"

"My dear sister!"

"What mean ye, girl?" inquired Lady Leslie, with returning haughtiness of manner.

"That you deceive yourself: I grant he was your principal, but not your *only*, object. Admiration was your food — your existence depended on it! If he were not present to give the necessary supply, you took it from other hands. Nay, do not look so sternly on me. I own that from him it was *sweeter* than from any; but, sister, it was sweet from all."

Lady Leslie gazed upon her young sister with astonishment. She had only considered her an affectionate kind girl; she had not sought to penetrate her character; vain people seldom care for others sufficiently to scrutinize their minds. And now, astonishment at her boldness was blended with veneration for her truth. Annette continued — "If my beloved sister would throw open the rich storehouse of her mind, and cultivate the affections of her heart, she would be more beloved than ever by her husband, and command the respect — if, indeed, it be worth commanding — of those who flattered: and, better still, of those who never soiled their lips by flattery or falsehood."

"Annette Feversham, the philosopher!" exclaimed the lady, contemptuously.

"Annette Feversham, the naturalist, if you will!" replied her sister, playfully: "May I tell you a little tale? it is very short, and very true. You know that when you were engaged in the business of fashionable life, your boy was turned over to his childish aunt, as companions well suited to each other. Well, sister, I have learned from children more wisdom, more of that natural wisdom which comes direct from God, than I ever learned from men. Their goodness is so active, and their thoughts given with so much honesty! I love to hear them prattle of their miniature hopes and fears, before deceit has taught them mystery or concealment. Do you remember, the first day you ventured to your dressing-room, you ordered Edward to be brought in? I was well long before, and had seen him frequently; but some weeks had elapsed since he had been permitted audience of his mother. Sister, you took him in your arms — kissed his fair brow a thousand times, and wept salt yet sweet tears of joy; they were brighter to my eyes than the gay jewels of your coronet; for they were nature's tears."

"Perhaps they were tears of pride, shed at my own sad change."

"I'll not believe it! — he, too, had suffered the disease, but 'scaped without a blemish. Ah, good my sister! you wept for joy — to see his brow unstained."

"I did! — I did!"

"I knew you did. I took him to his chamber; and, after a grave pause, he looked into my face, and, clasping his tiny hands, exclaimed, 'I am so happy that mamma has grown ugly: shall I tell you why, dear aunt? — It has taught her to be kind — she never kissed me so before. Shall I pray to-night that she may continue always ugly?' — Trust me, dear sister, Ned was the true philosopher: he knew that people, though they may be admired for beauty, are never loved for it."

"My poor boy!" said the lady, after a painful pause — "My poor, dear boy — he is a noble child! and I may thank you for it, Annette: I trusted him to menials; you saved him from contamination."

"I am not yet *come out*," retorted Miss Feversham, with her own peculiar archness of manner; "when I am I shall have other employments, I dare say, like other young ladies."

"Annette, do not trifle now. My child *might* think those seams of ~~life~~ consequence; but my husband! — then those women — those beauties whom I have so long eclipsed!"

"Ah, there it is! I will not believe it is on Leslie's account you sorrow — he is but one of the many! If I have wronged you by my frankness," she continued, seeing the cloud again gathering on her sister's brow, "study

but the arts he loves, and on my knees I'll crave a pardon — and never — never — never any more offend. He loves a country life — he loves simplicity —”

“He ought to have married you.”

“Perhaps he would, had I been old enough. My glorious sister! if you look so upon me, I'll never jest again. I know not why I jest — a jest is a play on truth — and truth I have ever worshipped. With reverence I speak; it is the earthly type of all things heavenly. God is truth — his word is truth — faith and truth are one — truth should be treasured in our hearts, yet dwell upon our lips, still flying, still remaining — brighten our eyes — shed a pure lustre over our features, a lustre that can make beautiful the plainest face. A noble thing is truth!”

“Annette, there's a new spirit created or roused within you.”

“Lady, it is not new; love may burn faintly for a time, but it can be quickly fanned by circumstances to a flame. I loved my sister; and when I looked into her mind I saw but one blot there — 't was vanity. I feel that I am touching a dangerous theme, with much too free a hand; but you have called me friend — that is a title dearer far than sister. I've heard you say men were capricious, and would feed on loveliness, like bees, taking honey, returning stings — that they would rove from flower to flower, seeking the sweetest: but Leslie is not one of these. We look upon the plainness of the thing we love till it grows into beauty.”

“He could not look on me, Annette,” replied Lady Leslie, “without drawing comparisons — what I was, and what I am.”

“My dear sister, let me tell you one more short story, and I have done.

“In an eastern country, no matter whether in Persia or Turkey, but somewhere in the East, there was a spring — a limpid spring, whose waters were like crystal; and upon the margin thereof the nymphs and good spirits used to congregate, and return thanks to Allah for having placed so delightful a fountain by the way-side. The holy men, who, journeying from country to country, drank of its refreshing waters, declared that it came directly from the centre of the world, and brought to its surface the virtues and medicaments that before were concealed in the bowels of the earth. The fame of the well spread far and near; and one of the rulers in that country said: —

“‘Behold! we will build around our spring — the spring wherewith Allah has blessed our land — a safeguard and a wall; and the wall shall be of alabaster, within and without — so that all who pass by shall marvel at the purity of the well. And we will set one to keep the well, and watch over it; and the name of her who watches and guards the well shall be called TRUTH.’

“And all the wise in that country who heard the words of the venerable ruler declared that they were good. And the ruler stroked his beard, which descended below his girdle. And the ruler said — ‘Let the thing be done forthwith.’ —

“But in that land there were more rulers than one; and another opened his mouth and spake. ‘The brain in the gray head is dry,’ said the youthful ruler; ‘and his eye dim, so that he cannot discern the fashions that spread over the earth: his ear is closed against the voice of improvement. Behold! we will tell him a thing! Why should our well, the spring of delight in our wilderness, be closed in alabaster, and one of such exceeding plainness as Truth set to guard its waters? Behold! we will plant a glorious tree beside the well; and its roots shall descend into the earth, and its branches ascend to the first heaven. And the tree shall bear the fruit of gems and jewels, which will sparkle in the sun, and overshadow our spring with splendour.’ And the young and the foolish shouted the shout of joy.

And the shouts of the young, and the shouts of the foolish, were louder than the shouts of the wise. So the young ruler curled his moustache, till its hairs saluted those of his soft hazel eyes, and said, 'The thing shall be done forthwith.'

"And the thing was done — the voice of the foolish prevailed for a time over the voice of the wise.

"Where is the goodness of the well, and where the purity of the water?" exclaimed those who once had praised its marvel and its beauty; 'behold! the roots of the filthy tree have disturbed its clearness.'

"My spring — my spring — my limpid spring!" wailed the voice of the last spirit that had lingered by its side, and could now no longer remain near its margin. 'Birds of no wisdom nest in the branches of the false tree, and the untrue gems have become cankered — and thy waters are corrupt. O that thou hadst been walled with alabaster, and guarded by Truth!'

"And, as the spirit passed sighingly away from the well, the spring itself replied: 'The sun shines, and the gems sparkle on me — what do I desire more?'

"And a great spirit heard the words; and the great spirit said that the words were foolish. And the great spirit resolved that he would uproot the unclean tree, and after a time restore the well.

"And the tree, which was named 'EXTERNAL BEAUTY,' became uprooted, at the command of the great spirit. And the waters of the spring were troubled, and mourned after the tree, and after the gay birds that filled its ear with foolishness.

"But the great spirit said, 'Let be — the well, in a little time, will regain its purity, now that the glare of external beauty is removed from its sight, and the roots of vanity from its heart; it can now drink into its depths the mysteries of heaven, and the light of Allah, and be satisfied with the wall of alabaster as a guard. Oh that so fine a well should have ever become corrupt!'

"My dear sister," persisted the fabulist, seeing that Lady Leslie was not displeased at her invention, "you are the well, and Leslie the wall of alabaster, and I am Truth, and your beauty was the tree; think less of the tree, and more of your husband and child; and, Annette Feversham's word upon it, he will love you better than ever. I will not tell you," she continued, with more tact than those unacquainted with the windings, the knowledge, and the mysteries of woman's heart, would have given her credit for — "I will not remind you that your figure is as perfect as ever — your eyes as brilliant — your teeth as white — your smile as gracious; and, as for those little pits, — they are graves for vanity! Write to your husband, sister — tell him —"

Lady Leslie started from her seat — and, after a moment's listening, exclaimed — "It is his horse's tramp; I know the sound of its hoofs among a thousand. Oh that I could hide this face from him and from the world!" She seized a veil which lay upon the sofa, and would have flung it over her head. But Annette drew up her slight figure with a gesture and a dignity that bore a miniature resemblance to her sister — and, taking the rich lace from the trembling and agitated hands of the lady, said, with both feeling and emphasis: —

"There is but one thing that should make a woman veil before her husband, and that is — shame. The house of Feversham knows it not!"

Lady Leslie could hardly help smiling at the tone of authority assumed by the little Annette; but she yielded, nevertheless, and forgot, at the time, in her husband's warm and affectionate greeting, the mortification which, for so many weeks, had steeped her proud soul in bitterness.

It is again evening — though five years have passed since the commencement of our tale — and on the lawn of Leslie Abbey, the lord and his noble lady are enjoying the prospect and the breeze of their native hills. The moat has been partly filled, and instead of weeds and wildness have sprung up goodly shrubs and smiling flowers. Here a vista has been carefully opened in the wood, and we may see the beautiful river wandering like animated silver beneath the smiles of the rising moon, until it is again swallowed in the darkness of the deep, deep forest.

Hark! the voice of joyous children from a neighbouring village — the shout — the laugh — the gay halloo — dancing amid the echoes of the hills; and we can perceive the spire of the village church — the church that they, the lord and his *once* proud wife, have built and beneficed; the country upon which they look is theirs — the silver river — the dark wood — the waving corn; — what else? — the hearts and blessings of their tenantry!

The Lady Leslie, after many struggles, followed the advice of her young and simple sister: she became literally a crown of glory to her husband, and was crowned in return by his perfect love.

"Where tarries our sister?" he inquired, after they had surveyed their wide domain, and heard the blackbird's last whistle, and watched the fog-wreath encircle the wood, and cast its mantle over the valley.

"She is with our children. Oh, Leslie! we both owe much to that girl, who blends so astonishingly the wisdom of the serpent with the gentleness of the dove and the frolic of the wild kid. I shall never forget the first lesson she read me on the advantage of personal plainness."

"Personal plainness! what has it to do with you?"

"Peace, peace, dear Leslie! Do not again awaken the vanquished spirit of pride within your wife's bosom; I sometimes fear it only sleeps; yet have I learned to bless 'lost beauty.' My trial has been turned into a triumph."

"Let it sleep on, then," replied the husband, of whose character Annette had rightly judged. "A British woman has something to be far more proud of than personal beauty."

THE CURSE OF PROPERTY.

THE TRIALS OF ALICE LEE.

"Give me neither poverty nor riches."

"Poor Barry!" exclaimed Mr. Newton. "Poor Barry! it was melancholy to see that once fine property melted away, one could hardly tell how, until even the noble dwelling of his ancestors was sold in lots to a fellow who printed 'Architect' on his card."

"I was his uncle's friend," sighed old Sir Charles Stanley; "and the recollection of that family — it is strange, but it is nevertheless true — the recollection of the fate of the different members of that family affords me at once the most exquisite pain and pleasure. I mourn over the love of display, and the pauperising system, pursued by poor but proud relations, through which that fine estate was utterly ruined; and I mourn over it the more, because it is far from being a singular instance of ruin, effected by the same means. You, my dear friend, will readily believe that the pleasurable reminiscences I experience arise from the noble conduct of that little black-eyed girl, Alice Lee, whom all the family, with the exception of Claudius, the heir-at-law, strove to injure; and whom they even now grudge the fair name and the fair fame she has acquired by her own industry and exertions."

"I should like to hear you tell the tale, Sir Charles," replied Mr. Newton. "I have often heard sketches of the history; but the loss of property, owing to mismanagement, is unfortunately so common in our poor country, that many similar events may have confused my memory with reference to this particular one."

"My old friend Charles Barry," commenced the venerable baronet, "had the misfortune to inherit, with his estate, the charge of some five or six half-brothers and sisters, who married, and had a greater number of 'blessings,' in the form of children, than usually falls to the lot even of Irish gentry. The being he at that time loved most in the world, was his own sister, a young woman nothing differing from other girls of her age and rank, and who, in due time, married two thousand a year (it was called) and a fox-hunting Squire. Mr. Barry's health had for some months been on the decline, and he resolved to visit Bath, then esteemed the most fashionable and health-giving place on earth."

"A little scene which occurred at Barrybrooke the evening before his departure, will best illustrate the *ménage* of an Irish bachelor's house in the year eighty-two. I was staying with him at the time, and we had agreed to travel together. I must, however, tell you, that he had determined upon not letting any of his numerous relatives, who came for 'sea air' to Barrybrooke, with the intention of remaining, some for three, others for nine, and others again for twelve months, know anything of his movements. In the evening he summoned Jerry Keg — valet by inheritance — and whom I

always remember the same stiff, upright, honest-looking fellow, with a grave air, a twinkling eye, and a twisted nose—into his study. Jerry entered, his high shoulders propping his ears, his head projecting like that of a tortoise, his hands folded behind his back, his old-fashioned, richly-laced livery sticking out on either side like the fins of a flat-fish.

“‘Jerry,’ said his master, ‘I wish my valise filled with rather a better supply of things than I require when I visit my sister; I wish Black Nell saddled, and as you accompany me, you must take Padreen, I suppose. Have all things ready by six o’clock to-morrow morning, and tell Meg we shall not return for a month.’

“‘It’s all clane impossibility, ye’r honour,’ replied Jerry, bowing; ‘Black Nell, I heard the groom say, wanted shoes, and I made an oath never to cross Padreen since he flung me into the apple-tree, over the fence. As to the valise, sir, honey! Mrs. Mooney’s little Jack cried for it to make a cart for Bran; indeed, it ’ud surprise ye’r honour to see the ’cuteness of that child—how he settled it car-fashion behind the dog’s tail, and made the natest little harness ye ever see, out o’ one of the new traces o’ ye’r honour’s gig.’

“‘And how dare you, sir,’ said my friend, incensed at this new proof of his not being master in his own house, ‘how dare you suffer Mrs. Mooney, or anybody else, to destroy my property in that way?’

“‘Sure, she ’s ye’r honour’s half-sister, and I hope I know manners too well to contradict a lady; much less one of ye’r honour’s blood relations.’

“‘Well, pack the things in a trunk, and we can all go in the carriage.’

“‘Oh, boo-boo-boo!—the carriage, is it? Sure, y’er honour’s own second cousin, Mr. Flinnerty, sint that off yesterday, to bring his nurse and the twins here, and his wife along wid ’em, to give ye an agreeable surprise, as he said, seeing y’er honour ’s so fond o’ children; and it’s my own opinion, that sorra a thrunk in the house ’ud hould together; they’ve been all let to drop to pieces, because it’s so long since they’ve been wanting.’

“‘What am I to do, Stanley?’ said my friend, looking at me despairingly.

“‘Simply thus,’ I replied; ‘let us leave our servants to follow, put a few things into my portmanteau—for I promise you, the outward man will need refitting when we arrive at our destination—and I will ride Dorton’s horse.’

“‘This was agreed upon, to Jerry’s mortification, who muttered, ‘He could ride the mule any way, the’ it was a stubborn devil, and it was no thing for a gentleman of family and fortune, like *his* master, to lave his own place without an attendant.’

“‘What do you mean to do with the herde, at present in possession of the house?’ I inquired, laughing: I always tried to laugh him out of his faults, for, like most of his countrymen, he was more proof against *reason* than *ridicule*.

“‘What can I do with them?’ he replied; ‘they are my own kith and kin; and as I am the head of the family, and a bachelor—poor creatures!—ay, it is easy for you to laugh—you English folk know nothing, and care less, about long-tailed families; with you, the junior members of a family, both males and females, contribute to their own support; with us—’

“‘The senior,’ I said, ‘is expected to provide for all, and is soon rendered, by that means, incapable of providing for himself. In the name of goodness, my dear fellow, if you must play almoner to such a tribe, do it in a rational way;—pay them so much a year—say ten, twenty, or thirty pounds each—but I defy any income to stand the constant drains to which yours is exposed;—men, women, and children—dogs, horses, and ser-

vants—make an eternal inn of your house. My life on't! you never know, from one year's end to another, how many eat at your board.'

" 'Meg does—and she is a faithful old creature.'

" 'True; but she has so long been accustomed to this Castle-Rackrent system, that it is for you to commence the reform—you cannot expect *her* to do it.'

" 'Faith, Charles, you are right,' he replied; 'but you cannot enter into my feelings. To tell you the simple truth, I could not afford to pay half the people I support ten pounds a year.'

" 'Permit me to ask how much their support costs you?'

" 'Eh?—Oh! a mere trifle, I suppose: but seriously,' (and he fixed his fine blue eyes upon me as he spoke,) 'you do not suppose me capable of the meanness of calculating what people eat and drink?'

" 'I would only wish you capable of the wisdom of considering whether, in justice to others, you can literally give more than you possess.'

" 'Justice! what do you mean?'

" 'Forgive me, my dear Barry, but have you paid off any of the embarrassments which hung over the estate when you came of age?'

" 'I cannot say I have.'

" 'If you have not paid off the principal, I trust the interest has been punctually discharged.'

" 'I cannot say that it has. I am never pressed for it; and somehow or other, the rents slip through my fingers before I have time to think of my debts.'

" 'Of course you investigate the accounts of your agent and steward regularly?'

" 'Strange beings you Englishmen are! My agent's a glorious fellow—exact as a dial, punctual as a dun. Oh, no! no necessity in the world to look after him; and as to my steward, faith! he's a clever fellow—so ingenious! cannot write much, but has a way of his own of keeping accounts—particular sorts of crosses he makes—amazingly curious, I assure you.'

" 'I smiled and sighed. Jerry knocked at the door.'

" 'I want to speak to ye'r honour.'

" 'Speak out, then, at once.'

" 'It's Mr. Maberly, the grazier, called about the three fat bullocks he sold ye'r honour last Christmas, to kill for the poor; and if it 'ud be convenient, jist to let him have the money, now.'

" 'Tell him it is *not* convenient, and send him to Dennis; why should he pester me about his dead bullocks? I thought he was paid long ago; there, leave the room.'

" 'The widdy Rooney is below, on account that her son is kilt intirely, and as good as dead, by the Spilloque boys; and she thought, maybe, ye'd help her in her trouble.'

" 'Poor thing! there, give her that,' tossing a guinea on the table; 'tell her, I'll commit her son if he gets into any of these broils again.'

" 'God bless you, sir! I'll tell him not to brile agen—if he can help it.'

" 'What, is he below?'

" 'As much as is left of him, ye'r honour;' and away went Jerry. The just creditor, therefore, was dismissed without even an apology—the rioting youth, with a reward! I noted this, and more!—I urged his remaining even for a day or two longer, for the purpose of arranging his accounts. It was useless; he laughed me off, and promised, that on his return he would 'see about it.' Alas! how many of the bright and shining lights of this poor country have been extinguished by PROCRASTINATION!

" His easy manners, his good nature, and really handsome person, made him a universal favourite at Bath, and many a lady of large fortune would

readily have bestowed upon him hand and heart ; but Charles was no fortune-hunter — he considered the lust of gold

‘The last corruption of degenerate man,’

and fixed his affections upon a young and beautiful widow lady with one daughter, whom he had accidentally met at the house of a mutual friend. Although his passion was violent, I saw good reason why it should be lasting. United to feminine loveliness, she possessed the rare endowments of judgment and gentleness ; there was a steadiness, a sobriety about her, which made Barry often say, in the words of the poet,

‘I have a heart for her that’s kind,
A lip for her that smiles ;
But if her mind be like the wind,
I’d rather foot it twenty miles.’

“ ‘She is so uniform,’ he would add, ‘that I almost think her too good for me, who am so volatile ; yet I love her for the contrast the more.’

“It is exceedingly difficult to throw off the trammels that have grown with our growth ; and when he was accepted by this interesting woman, he positively wanted courage to write and inform his sister of his intended marriage.

“ ‘Poor thing,’ said he to me, one morning, ‘she will so grieve at my being married ; for she has even now instilled into the mind of her only son, Claudius, who is about six years of age, that he is to be sole heir to my property.’

“ ‘If,’ I replied, ‘she has been absurd enough to act in that way, she deserves punishment. In addition to supporting the cousin-clan, is it usual for the head of a family to remain in a state of single blessedness to please his relations ?’

“He smiled ; but not until after they were united did he communicate his attachment to his sister. He went farther ; — he wrote to old Meg, to say, that grieved as he might feel, it was necessary that no visitors should remain at Barrybrooke, as Mrs. Barry disliked company. So far, so good ; would that he had persevered in a course so decided !

“I could not repeat, if I would, the innumerable mortifications which Mrs. Barry experienced on her visiting Ireland for the first time. The manners and habits of the people ill accorded with her English feelings. From being the admired and beloved of a circle of intellectual and accomplished persons, she found herself shut up in a castellated, dilapidated house, with bare-footed housemaids (I write of what was forty years since) and other servants, to whom the English language was totally unknown. Everything, from the kitchens to the attics of the rambling building, wanted arrangement ; and she was bewildered where first to commence the reformation. Out of two-and-twenty servants, to discharge ten appeared the most likely mode of getting anything done properly ; and this step immediately made her unpopular with the peasantry. Then she blundered dreadfully as to the management of her parties, — asked Orangemen and their wives to meet the priest of the parish ; and placed the rector’s wife, at table, above a lady who was decidedly second-cousin to the great Earl of Ormond ! These offences were not to be forgiven in a neighbourhood where every circumstance formed an event, and where, if truth must be told, the women envied her beauty — the men feared her intellect. Then the family ! — how was it to be expected that they could pardon Mr. Barry for marrying, in the first place, and for not consulting them in the second ? The thing was impossible, and they acted accordingly.

“Harriet, the daughter of Mrs. Barry by her first marriage, was a proud

and silent girl, but possessed of exquisite feeling. Her troubles were hard and many; but they were not of long duration; she pined, and wasted, and wept in secret; and at last, as the only way left of escaping from a place where she felt every eye glared suspiciously on her, clandestinely married, and, in less than twelve months afterwards, gave birth to a female child, and died. Mr. Barry, with the pure kindness of spirit which always characterized his impulses, gave the little orphan into his wife's arms, and bursting into tears, exclaimed —

“It is your grandchild, — it shall be also mine; I will be unto it a true parent.”

“You know that my friend had not been blessed with children: so that the feeling on his part towards the helpless innocent was natural. The person most displeased, when my little friend Alice Lee took up her abode at Barrybrooke, was Mr. Barry's sister; her son, Claude Barry, as he was always called, (his father, by the way, two years after his birth, broke his neck in a steeple-chase,) was naturally considered heir to his uncle's property; and it was a sad thing, in her opinion, for a stranger to take even part of the good things she wished her son exclusively to possess. Claude himself was always a truly good-natured boy, though not very fond of reflecting.

“I can't think why you all hate that little child,” he would say; ‘she is a merry soul, and gets my uncle out of his nervous fits sooner than any one else, with her innocent prattle; she is quite a comfort to them both in the long winter evenings when the place is too dull for us to remain there.’

“Innocent, indeed!” replied one of the family *coterie*, when the observation was finished. ‘I wonder how *she* could be *innocent*, tutored as she is by her grandmother.’

“I am astonished you have not more discernment, Claude, than not to see,” said his mother, ‘that the little imp is brought up with mighty high notions: the very last time I was there, she cried because there was no sugar in her bread and milk.’

“It's a comfort,” kindly added a third, ‘that the child is indisputably ugly: — a little bit of a thing, notwithstanding all the cramming she gets, with a monstrous forehead towering over her eyes, making her look as if she had water on the brain.’

“She's as proud as Lucifer,” subscribed a fourth, ‘and would stamp like a fury, if she had n't a clean frock on twice a day — fine English airs, indeed!’

“We may all be obliged to her yet, for all that,” said Claude, laughing, and making the remark more from a love of tormenting, than anything else; ‘poor thing! I shall be the only one among you, who never thought or said an unkind word of her!’

“And more fool you!” and ‘You'll repent it!’ and that always safe and wise saying, ‘Time will tell!’ was echoed about, through the scandalous council, until poor Claude wished that the holidays were over, and he was fairly back at school. The following summer, many of the same party were staying at Barrybrooke; for disagreeable as they certainly were to Mrs. Barry, she bore their society with praiseworthy forbearance: unfortunately, some words had arisen between her and Claude's mother, on a very unimportant matter, and the lady was anxious for an opportunity of mortifying her sister-in-law. Mr. Barry was from home; but after dinner, when the dessert was placed on the table, Mrs. Barry desired the servant to send in Miss Alice, who was then about six years old. The little girl came, as usual, to her grandmamma's knee, at the moment Claude was helping himself to some currants.

“Give a few of those to Alice, dear,” said Mrs. Barry.

“Help yourself first, my darling,” observed his mother; adding, in a

bitter under-tone, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs.'

" 'True,' replied the lady; 'yet the dogs do eat of the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table.'

"Mrs. Barry rose as she spoke; and I shall never forget the dignity with which she crossed the dining-hall, to leave the apartment in which she had suffered so gross an insult: — those who felt justly (I was one of the number) followed. Alice perfectly understood what had passed; and the little thing stood where her grandmamma had sat, swelling with rage. Claude heaped the plate with currants, and called her affectionately to his side. Alice looked at him with an expression I shall never forget. At last, swallowing her passion, she shook her head, and turning to his mother, said, very quietly, —

" 'I am no dog; I am, as you have often called me, a little ugly girl; but the time may come, when those who hate me now, may be glad to pick crumbs from my table, and thank me for them too.'

"This spirited reply coming from one so young, drew forth many and various observations from the party. Claude was indignant at the cruelty of his parent, and followed his aunt with apologies, and even tears. This was only one incident in a thousand of the dislike evinced to this hapless child, of whose father, I should have told you, nothing had been heard for a considerable period, as he went abroad on the death of his wife. In the mean time, the circumstances of my old friend were far from improving; his habitual neglect of money matters, and his eternal procrastination, were swiftly leading to a destruction, which, as Mrs. Barry was ignorant of its extent, she could not prevent. Indeed, the very exactness with which she conducted household matters, was attributed to her as a crime.

" 'Where's the use of painting palings, for the rain to batter against?' said one: 'such expense, indeed!'

" 'Then,' said another, 'there was an enormous bill for building two pigsties: even if the beasts *did* get into the garden, now and then, what great matter was it? where's the good of flowers?'

" 'Could n't she let the tenants go on as they used,' exclaimed a fourth, 'and take the spinning and duty fowls from their wives, as others did before her? What was the time of the poor to them? Talk of extravagance! was n't it the height of extravagance to pay women for spinning, when it could be done for nothing?'

"Mrs. Barry's system, whatever might have been the prejudice entertained against her by the peasantry, as 'a fine lady from foreign parts, who was come to reign over them,' was productive of so much good to the poor, that they soon regarded her as their best friend, and their gratitude and affection was the greatest consolation she possessed, for I cannot deny that increasing difficulties pressed hard upon Mr. Barry, and that he wanted resolution to tear himself away from family and party feuds. These circumstances soured his temper, and made him at times capricious and severe. It is well known, that at home or abroad, whatever goes wrong with a married man, is revenged upon his wife. Perhaps I ought not to say *revenged*, but I can hardly find a term to express the ill temper which is too often shown at home, when adverse circumstances are encountered out of the domestic circle.

"Your own poet has expressed in language so chaste and beautiful the peculiar feelings which this sort of thing generates, that I will repeat you the lines: —

'A something light as air — a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken, —
Oh! love, that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch, like this, has shaken.'

"Are they not beautiful?" exclaimed the old gentleman again. "Not that matters were so bad with them, either; but certainly, something was fast undermining Mrs. Barry's constitution. I would not have said that her chief happiness arose from the consolation afforded her in the affection of her tenants, had I remembered the devoted tenderness of her grandchild, and the delight she took in attending to her education. The development of the girl's mind was both rapid and powerful. Distant as they were from towns, no aid of masters could be obtained. Mrs. Barry knew enough of music to teach the child its rudiments; and Alice, gifted with a fine ear, and a genuine love for the charming science, made swift progress in the art she loved. Many studies were resorted to, with the view of occupation, that would not have been thought of under other circumstances, or if the little maid had enjoyed the society of those of her own age. Her grandfather taught her Latin, and the priest of the parish instructed her in Italian. Of what are usually called children's books, she never possessed any; but could repeat, almost by heart, the Histories of Hume and Rollin, with many of the ancient chronicles. Her light reading varied from the Arabian Nights to the History of the Robber Freany, with odd volumes of Irish History, and now and then a romance of the Radcliffe school. Shakspeare she loved; Milton she revered; but there was one book that was invariably perused morning and evening, which laid the foundation of her good conduct and future prosperity. Her grandmother saw that her romantic and rambling mind needed a powerful corrective. Situated as she was, and feeling that the child was debarred from amusements suited to her age and sex, — observing also the avidity with which she swallowed information, and unable, from the increasing delicacy of her health, to guide her as she wished, — she wisely felt the necessity of strengthening her religious impressions. The imagination of my young friend readily caught at the beauties of Scripture, but her grandmother wished her reason to be convinced of its truths: this she happily effected, and the silence and solitude of her sick room often echoed the pure doctrines of salvation, and the breathing prayers dictated by faithful hearts. Barry procured for his wife, at an immense expense, the best medical advice the country afforded. His affection had cooled, but never changed; and the prospect of losing one so dear, redoubled his attentions. It was, however, of no avail: and, after a tedious illness, I followed her to her grave. Alice had never left her sick bed: it was a touching sight, to see the expiring effort the pale but still beautiful woman made to place the hand of the weeping child within that of her husband: he fell on his knees, and solemnly swore to protect Alice Lee to the latest hour of his life, and to bestow upon her a handsome income at his death.

"I do not want that last promise," she said in a trembling voice, "she can make riches for herself. Protect her, but let her be independent!"

"Independent" was the last word this excellent woman uttered; no wonder then that it was a hallowed feeling and a hallowed sound to the heart and the ear of her grandchild.

"I will be independent," said the sweet girl, as she strewed the flowers in which her grandmother had delighted, over the silent corpse, and placed to her cheek the blooming roses which she had so loved to cultivate; and then she laid her own head on the same pillow, and read in the Book of Life, of eternity, and heaven, and worlds beyond the grave — and was comforted in her affliction!

"She had watched from her chamber window the slowly pæcing funeral pass from the court-yard, the coffin supported by eight of the oldest tenants, who claimed the privilege of carrying it to its resting-place, and Claude Barry, in right of kin and as the representative of his uncle, (who was too ill to perform the melancholy duty,) following as chief mourner. She

had seen the procession, attended by a multitude of people, wind round the hill side, till it was concealed from her view by a dense wood that overshadowed the road, and drying her tears she entered the dark room where her grandfather was nurturing in secret the bitterness of grief. She seated herself quietly by his side, and made a sign of silence to old Jerry, who had followed her into the apartment, and whose infirmities prevented his attending the funeral: surprised that he motioned her towards the window which looked out upon the avenue, she opened the shutter so as to peep forth and ascertain his meaning. The old porter at the second gate was engaged in evidently a fierce contention with some four or five men, who demanded free passage to the house. Poor Alice trembled all over, for she had heard of writs and executions, as calamities threatened against her grandfather; but as he had 'managed to keep them off,' (alas! for such management,) she never thought they would really arrive at Barrybrooke. The appearance of the men, the agitation of the servant, and above all their suddenly pushing past the porter, while Jerry exclaimed so loud as to startle his master; 'I'll bar the doors,' confirmed her in the feeling, that they were sheriff's officers. And she flung herself on her protector's neck, exclaiming, 'What shall we do!'

"Poor Barry looked for a moment on the men as they wheeled round the house, to approach the door. I see who they are," he said in a quiet voice; 'alas! and was not my heart sufficiently broken? and have I already lived to see the, time when I return thanks to the Almighty for having taken from me the wife of my bosom—so that she has been spared this misery?'

"He walked to the hall, where his faithful servant, in the true spirit of Irish fidelity, had drawn the bolts, and established himself with a rusty musket, that had done the rooks and magpies much mischief, on his shoulder, resolved to protect the dwelling from 'bailiff or sheriff.'

"Open the door, Jerry," said my friend.

"What, ye'r honour?"

"Open the door."

"For what, plaze ye'r honour, 'ud I do that same?"

"To admit these men."

"Lord bless ye'r honour, and keep ye in ye'r right mind, which ye' are not in at this present time, or ye'd niver give way to the like o' them."

"Fool," exclaimed Mr. Barry as they thundered at the portal, 'do as I command you.'

"Master, darlint!" replied the poor fellow, 'you may trample on me if ye like, and call me what ye plaze; but I'll niver be the means of letting shame into the house, in the shape o' the law,—only the boys are all at the funeral, it's long till they'd suffer such sarpints to walk the country.—Well, since ye'r determined on it, do it ye'rself, sir. I niver opened the door to a limb of the law, nor I niver will.'

"Jeremiah flung down his musket, and hastily left the hall, while Alice clung closely to her grandfather's arm.

"Come in, gentleman, come in," said he, with a frightful calmness of manner; 'here I am, you see;—be seated, and tell your business.'

"The business was soon told; a writ against his person at the suit of Benjamin Maberly, *Esquire*, for cattle furnished during a period of sixteen or eighteen years—a sort of running account, with now and then a nominal settlement; bills bearing interest, and sundry other expenses;—this claim alone amounted to the enormous sum of two thousand pounds; for my poor friend had often taken it into his head to stock farms, and speculate in sheep, pigs, and oxen—speculations that always terminated badly, from his unfortunate habit of never attending to his own business, but leav-

ing it to others to manage for him. Another of these men of law had an execution against his goods and effects, for the sum of three thousand pounds, he having bestowed upon a favourite cousin a bond for fifteen hundred pounds, upon his commencing 'professional man;' the interest of this, of course, was never paid nor demanded, but on his refusing to lend the young hopeful some two or three hundred pounds, which he thought proper to require, he placed the affair in an attorney's hands, who urged immediate proceedings on the bond, the interest of which had amounted to a sum equal to the principal. Mr. Barry was very unfit to think or act; but Alice prevailed on the officer who made the arrest, to wait until the arrival of his friends; the other proceeded calmly to take an inventory of the furniture; while the master of the mansion seemed perfectly torpid. Claude and myself returned with three or four others from the melancholy funeral to the house of mourning. As to poor Claude, he had all the family taste for expenditure, and the property he inherited from his father was mortgaged to its full value. This did not prevent his living in style; he had a good stud, fine dogs, and a machine to drive in, that almost broke one's neck to look at; he had given a ball on his coming of age, which cost almost as much as the fee-simple of his estate was really worth; and his mother, with her usual wisdom, observed that it was of little consequence, considering her son's expectations.

"Claude, therefore, could do little — except join me in bail, which was entered into immediately, and securities given for the payment of the other demand; in less than an hour after our return, Jerry had the inexpressible satisfaction of banging the hall door after 'the *sarpiants*,' and of drinking (a ceremony, by the way, the poor fellow never omitted) 'Destruction to the law,' in a bumper of pure whiskey. I remained at Barrybrooke, and endeavoured to unravel the difficulties with which my friend was encompassed. I confess they far exceeded what I anticipated. To enter into details would be useless. Suffice it to say, that on his marriage, to pacify his relations, he had granted annuities, which had never been regularly paid, and then had given security on his property for the various sums that went on accumulating, he knew not how; then none of the old encumbrances had been paid off; and the fine domain, which could have supported the establishment if properly farmed, was positively nothing more than a common for the neighbours' horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and poultry to revel on. Mrs. Barry had retrenched most considerably the household expenses; but as my friend, Alice Lee, said, 'grandmamma was never suffered to know grandpapa's affairs; and what she saved, even from her own personal comforts, was expended out of doors.' Claude's difficulties were quite as perplexing. The advice I gave to both parties was as follows; — Mr. Barry to sell off as much property as would discharge all pressing demands, (for when one creditor comes down on an estate, the rest are sure to follow,) to let Barrybrooke, and go abroad for five or six years, live on a small allowance, and thus perfectly clear what was spared. Claude we recommended to marry a rich widow, who was known to look favourably on him, and pay off his debts with her fortune, providing an annuity for her from his estate.

"'Cousin Claude,' said Alice, quietly, 'take my advice: they say you have fine oratorical talents, go to the bar, and make a fortune for yourself.' It may be easily imagined, that the advice given was not relished by either. Barry's pride revolted at the idea of selling a single acre; and Claude did not like the widow, because he had chosen to fall in love with a girl without either character or fortune. Some accommodation was made with the creditors, and my friend resolved to go abroad. A noble lord offered to take the house, and reside there; but no! — again family pride was up in arms: — and although the certainty that Barrybrooke could not be kept in

even decent order under an immense expense was dwelt upon by his true friends, he disdained to let it; decided that three old servants should remain to take care of it, and as quickly as possible bade adieu to the halls of his ancestors, leaving the property at nurse for his creditors, and reserving only an income of three hundred a year for himself. All his relatives objected strongly to his being accompanied only by Alice Lee. — 'She'll be sure to come round him,' they exclaimed one and all, 'and if only six pen'oth of property is left, it's only just that right should have it.' It was all in vain: Barry took a proud, cold leave of his 'dear relations' and 'particular friends': his spirit had been bitterly wounded by his late misfortunes; but it was not by any means subdued.

"'Jerry,' said he, as the poor fellow held open the carriage door, 'see that the widow Murphy has the milk as usual, and the children at the school their clothing at Christmas; the agent will attend to it.' (I must tell you that I had used every exertion to prevail on him to appoint a new agent, but in vain,) — and Barry was trying to conquer his emotion, when Alice, her face swollen with weeping, sprang into the carriage. The only living thing she possessed — a pet lamb, attempted to follow her, and looked up bleating in her face. 'Keep it, Jerry,' she said, 'it is all I have to give you, and I give it you as a remembrance.'

"The carriage drove on: at the gate, a concourse of tenantry, and the poor whom he had so often relieved, awaited him. They stopped the carriage: some of the men, who had grown gray on the estate, came forward. 'We have lived and flourished under ye'r honour, and them that's dead and gone, for many years; and ye've never distressed us, nor offered to do it. If ye'r honour 'ill stay among us, and keep from foreign parts, we'll make an advance on our rents, and pay up at once't to next half-year; do n't lave us to the marcy o' strangers, and we'll work for ye', and fight for ye', and never let a writ or a sheriff come near the house.'

"'Och! do n't go to leave us,' exclaimed a poor woman, laying her thin hand on the coach window. 'Oh! do n't, agra! Miss, do n't let him — and the mistress, God mark her soul to glory! not *could* in her grave yet!' All this was too much for my poor friend; he could only reply, covering his face with his hands, 'God bless you all! I must go now; but I will return to you in happier times.'

"Mr. Barry proceeded to France: the idea of cheap living is connected, perhaps truly, with the Continent. An Irish gentleman is sure of a kind reception abroad; and the intelligent and cheerful manners of my friend Alice, equally free from English stiffness and French levity, increased the feeling of kindness into esteem. Barry, however, could not long remain contented in the provinces, and determined on a visit to Paris. This certainly was not wise; but Alice Lee had the happy art of extracting sweets from poison. She was introduced to some persons of literary distinction there, who discovered that her powerful and clear mind was capable of great efforts, and much usefulness. They taught her to soar, and directed her flight with judgment and kindness. Her attempts were made without even the knowledge of her grandfather, who read and approved her first production without having an idea from whose pen it proceeded; — his feelings can be better imagined than described, when he discovered that 'his little cherished child,' — the scorned, the despised one — had not only received, but merited the praise of some of the most celebrated persons in France; he was not slow in sending this intelligence over. I, indeed, heard it with far more pleasure than surprise; but it threw every member of the long-tailed family into utter consternation. 'The thing was impossible — what! the little pug-nosed girl, who had never been to school, to be praised in the newspapers, and thought much of by learned people, — for *her* to write a book, a whole book, who had learned to hold her pen from a village school-

master!' Fancy, my dear sir, all the exclamations of vulgar Irish astonishment, and even then you can hardly have an idea of the hubbub the news occasioned. — Happily for Alice, she was not one of those morbid literary ladies, who mourn at their hard fate, and pretend to sorrow because their minds are superior to their neighbours, — who sigh and sentimentalise over their being obliged to appear before the public, and yet use every justifiable and unjustifiable mode of forcing celebrity. Alice was in the purest sense of the word a Christian, and she felt the necessity of doing her duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call her. She shrank not from the useful exercise of her abilities, and she had good sense enough to perceive that the odium, which at that time, even more than now, attached to literary women, proceeded from the attention they exacted, and the airs of superiority they assumed, in society. She did not neglect the cultivation of simple flowers, because she was skilled in botany; she did not cease to charm by the exercise of her fine melodious voice, because she comprehended the nature of sound; nor did she delight less in the mazes of the dance, because she understood the laws of motion. Though she became an *author*, she had not ceased to be a *woman*: her motives were noble — her actions pure; so that she neither needed, nor wore, a mask: — this was the grand secret of her popularity.

"The creditors of Mr. Barry's estate had lately become clamorous, and declared that the sums stipulated for had not been regularly discharged. My friend found it necessary to go over to Ireland, and settle matters, the derangement of which he could not account for; even his stipend had not lately been remitted, and but for the exertions of Alice Lee, he would have suffered much pecuniary difficulty. He felt that he ought to clear himself from the imputation of connivance, where evidently, on the agent's part, mismanagement, if not dishonesty, must have been practised: he came upon the man unexpectedly, and the fellow paled and trembled before him. Conscious and confused, he fixed the next morning for the explanation of his accounts, but that very night set off for America, taking with him a very considerable sum, which he had prevailed on the tenants to advance, in addition to their rents, under the idea of ministering to their landlord's necessities. This was a dreadful blow to my friend's feelings: Alice had suffered much from delicate health, and he would not subject her to the fatigue of a journey; but earnestly did he long for her presence, to support and cheer him. About three weeks after he had quitted Paris on this unfortunate business, Alice Lee received the following letter, sealed with dismal black; the first page was in the hand-writing of her beloved guardian and relative. She afterwards permitted me to copy it.

'MY BELOVED CHILD,

'Barrybrooke, Dec. 18—.

'I ought not to have written you so gloomy an account; it was sadly selfish of me to disturb your mind when I know how much depends on the work you are now engaged upon. You would gladly support your poor grandfather — would you not? even if he had not an acre left. No account of that villain since he sailed from Cork. Alice, pray for me — pray that my senses may be spared. The ingratitude I meet with, is the scorpion's sting that festers in my heart. Pray for me, Alice Lee! I suppose it must come to a sale. Sell Barrybrooke! And the trees and flowers *she* planted! But I shall have one unfading flower left; — you, Alice! Poor Claude is even worse off than myself. Oh! *the curse of property*, managed as it is in this unhappy country. Would that I had been bred a common tradesman; I should then have been *independent*, and not afraid to look every man I meet in the face, lest he should ask me for money. Do you know that my sternest creditors are those of my own kin? I am sick at heart, my child, and you are not here. Do you remember the evening you left that splendid

conversazione at the Count de Leonard's to come home, that you might give me the medicine with your own hand? Yet I would not have you *here* now for the world. Jerry grows young again, and Sir Charles is kind as ever: it is too late to wish now, — but if I had taken his advice, — good night, my child. You are the only being related to me who never gave me cause for anger. Good night — God bless you! to-morrow I will finish my letter."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Sir Charles, as he lifted his eyes from the painful record. "When the next sun rose, his spirit had met his God: — his heart indeed was broken. The remainder was written by his old servant."

'May it plaze ye, Miss, to put up with me to tell ye the sorrowful tidings, — that nixt mornning when I wint as usual into his honour's room, he was clane gone, and as *could* as a stone; they worried the soul out o' him, that they did; and my curse, and the curse o' the poor, 'ill rest heavy on 'em to the day o' judgment for that same. I wish ye could see how beautiful he looks this minute; jist 'smilin' in his coffin. So best; for he's beyant trouble now. — God be praised! they could n't keep his sowl from glory! Poor Master Claude is like one mad, and Sir Charles is forced to order the funeral: it 'ill be the thing to do honour to the name, and a grand berrin' as ever was seen in the country; priests and ministers, and all the heart's-blood o' the gentry — and it's my intintion, now that the dear master's gone, to travel into foreign parts myself, and wait upon you, Miss, who must want some one to look after ye; seeing (no offence, I hope!) that ye are all as one as my own born child: and so keep up y'er heart, and God's fresh blessin' be about ye, prays y'er humble and faithful servant (till death) to command.

'JEREMIAH KEG.'

"The funeral justified Jerry's expectations. It was feared that an attempt would have been made to arrest the body, but the tenants came prepared for such an event; they were armed, and would have sacrificed their lives, sooner than have suffered a sheriff's officer to lay a finger on the coffin. The scene of confusion and abuse which ensued among those, who, notwithstanding they knew the state of embarrassment the property was in, quarrelled over it, like starved jackalls over mouldering bones, is sickening to think upon. In about six weeks, the estates of the *late* Charles Barry, Esq. were advertised to be sold by the sheriff, for the benefit of the creditors of the said estates. The sorrow of sweet Alice Lee was agonizing to witness or think upon; and even now she has not ceased regretting that she did not accompany her grandfather on his *last* journey. Agitation brought on a nervous fever; and her friends in Paris, for more than a month, dreaded what its final effects might be. She recovered slowly; and one day I was sitting with her in the drawing-room, (when I found I could be of no service in Ireland, I went to see her,) when the lady she was staying with, endeavouring to divert her mind, observed, with the good-humoured playfulness of her country, that Alice's last work had made a conquest of an old half-Indian gentleman, a Mr. Clifton, an Englishman, she believed, who wished he were young enough to make love to her.

"'Clifton was my dear grandmother's name,' replied Alice; 'and she had a brother once, but he died, I believe.' A vague idea, which I could neither account for nor express, took possession of my mind. The next morning I waited on the old gentleman; and judge of my delight and astonishment, when I found, after much investigation, that Mr. Clifton was indeed the brother of her grandmother, who had gone abroad when his

sister was too young to remember aught about him, and who had returned a wifeless and childless man: and the discovery of such a relative was a source of extraordinary happiness to him. He was a proud, stern man, very unlike the parent she had lost; yet he soon proved that he was anxious to bestow upon her what the world calls substantial proofs of his affection. Being the avowed heiress of a rich Indian merchant could add nothing to the lustre of Alice Lee, but it increased her power of doing good. The idea of Barrybrooke being sold rendered her very miserable. 'Claude was always very kind to me,' she said, and I should like to prove that I am not ungrateful, by saving the house and domain for him.' Her uncle, who might well be proud of her, when I mentioned this wish to him, caught with avidity at the idea of gratifying her, and agreed to give money for the purpose, just as if he were bestowing upon her a splendid toy. He wished to visit Dublin, and we set out for that once splendid city with many and varied feelings. But I tire you, — a moment more, and my tale is ended. We were grieved; on our arrival there, to find that the sale had been hurried forward: by the desire of Alice Lee, I wrote to the sheriff, offering terms for the house, &c. of Barrybrooke. Through some precious mistake, which could not occur in any other country, my letter miscarried. We drove down to the estate, and here you must let me mention an instance of the delicacy of my favourite's mind. She positively would not travel in her uncle's carriage, but racketed the old gentleman all to pieces in an Irish post-chaise.

"'It would insult their distress,' she said, 'to go in splendour, when the family of my benefactor is reduced almost to want.' The auction was going on when we drove into the town; we were ten minutes too late; the very house of Barrybrooke had been sold to the architect I spoke of! The kind and generous feelings of my young friend were thus thrown into another channel; she purchased an annuity for 'Cousin Claude,' and to the hour of his death he never knew from whom the income came, that enabled him to live with so much comfort during the five years he survived his uncle. She practised the revenge of a Christian: she did good to those who had spitefully used her, nor were they averse to partake of whatever crumbs she chose to bestow. You know the romance of her marriage, and we have often laughed at the grotesque figure Jerry exhibited at Paris; — by the way —"

Mr. Newton looked at his watch! — the kind-hearted, garrulous old gentleman took the hint, only adding, that the motto adopted by Alice, was **INDEPENDENCE**, the device, a little bark passing through a stormy sea, with Hope at the helm, and the haven in view; and adding, "Thank God, all the trials of Alice Lee were endured in youth: her after-age was free from them, save and except those inherent in, and doubtless necessary to, human nature."

THE VISIONARY.

THE TRIALS OF DELPHINE BARRINGTON.

"But her early trials were purely imaginary. All her life she was possessed of wealth, and rank, and reputation; that is, reputation of a certain class — the reputation of beauty and cleverness, *and all that sort of thing.*"

"What do you mean by 'all that sort of thing,' Myra?" inquired Lady Constance of her niece, who had made the observation.

"Why, you know — all that sort of thing — beauty and cleverness, — you know what I mean, dear aunt?"

"I know, at least I imagine I know, what beauty is, and I can appreciate cleverness — but as to 'all that sort of thing!' it is one of those undefined expressions which are perpetually waging war with common sense and correct language. People get hold of a string of words, and send them forth, on the same principle that a tail is appended to a paper kite — as small ballast to a weak judgment."

"My dear aunt!"

"My Myra — I do not mean to hurt you in any way; but I confess myself sick and ashamed at the miserable paucity of ideas and expressions continually manifest in what is termed polite conversation. I would not have you a chatter-box, but I think — perhaps my opinion is old-fashioned — but I do think the aim and object of conversation is to be understood."

Young Myra pouted a little; but she was too deeply interested in the subject not to draw her aunt's attention again to Delphine, whose life and trials had been much talked of in what she called "the world;" but which, in fact, was nothing more than the coterie of which she was a unit.

"I am sure," she persisted, "I have heard you say, a thousand times, that Delphine's trials were purely imaginary."

"You have heard me say they originated in imagination; she wound up her mind to a particular pitch, and whatever did not harmonize with it, her sensibility magnified into a misery; but you must remember that, although the greater number of her trials arose from this source, they were afterwards converted into real misfortunes; the less likely to be relieved, because their origin was within her own bosom. The fact is, Delphine began life upon a wrong principle. She desired to measure all with whom she came in contact by her own standard of excellence. She was not content to take the world as it is, but she wished to arrange people and things according to her own notions of fitness; she had a sublime and exquisite idea of perfection; her tastes were pure and refined, and her susceptibilities strong. If she had been less the spoiled child of fortune she might have become tractable; but a woman who, at nineteen, finds herself mistress of five thousand a year, and has learned its value in her nursery, is hardly under the dominion of reason. Delphine never affected sentiment

— but she felt it. Her brilliant imagination was perpetually at work ; a phrenologist would have said, that she should have been continually brought into contact with facts — that so the influence of fiction might be diminished ; but, sooth to say, five thousand a year procures to the possessor numberless arguments in favour of whatever theory the said possessor wishes to establish. And Delphine's acquaintances were more inclined to flatter her wild extravagances than to correct them."

"Would she have thanked them for their advice?" inquired Myra.

"Probably not, in the first instance: but true friendship works without such recompense: and Delphine was too affectionate not to be grateful, when once assured it was her benefit that was sought. The whole train of her miseries arose out of an *uncontrolled imagination*."

"You think, then," said Myra, gravely, "that her faults or crimes arose from that cause, not from a predilection for vice?"

"I do. I believe that crime in woman, in nine cases out of ten, originates in the faults and circumstances arising from an ill-directed, or, at best, an unsubdued imagination. Facts are what women are seldom acquainted with; so that they reason from false conclusions. Society, particularly of gone-by days, has much to answer for: the weaknesses of women have been cherished; they have been educated on principles equally irrational and unphilosophic; and yet greater strength, greater forbearance, is expected from them than men are ever called upon to practise. The knowledge of this truth has taught me mercy; and I never perceive the full tide of public opinion running against a woman without questioning its justice, and feeling inclined to alter its course, and turn it against men, who are a thousand times as bad, and yet are received as if they were *sans reproche*."

"Shall we revolt?" inquired Myra, laughing; "and, taking society into our own hands, change the current of affairs?"

"I believe," replied Lady Constance, "that, even in this age of change, what may be termed a 'revolt' would be perfectly useless; but society is much more in our own hands than men would care to confess; we could do a great deal if we went properly to work. Most females endeavour to rule by a species of petty intrigue, and accomplish great ends by little means; this must render them contemptible even to those over whom they triumph. Whereas —"

"I know what you are going to say," interrupted the lively Myra. "You are going to say, that women should rule by the power of gentleness, if that is not inexplicable, and should show by practice what their precepts are. But never mind that now, dear aunt. You knew Delphine when she was young, before a breath had been breathed against her reputation; and you know, and even visit her, now that she is old."

"Ah! my child!" replied Lady Constance; "I do—I do visit her, because I feel for her, and because she has not ceased to feel for herself. I have gathered many pearls from her lips. And in her old age, happily for herself, she has seen her folly."

"When it is too late!" sighed Myra.

"Too late," replied Lady Constance, "for this world's happiness; but you remember, I hope, it is not for this world alone we live."

"Her experience, my dear aunt, must be worth hearing."

"It is; but the ear of youth is more hardened against the voice of experience than the stone, which, it is known, can be indented by a perpetual drop. How wise we should be if, instead of seeking that same treasure for ourselves, we profited by the experience of others!"

"But Delphine—Delphine—aunt mine; do let me hear all about Delphine!"

Lady Constance smiled, and took up her knitting, which her niece well

knew was a certain indication that her wish would be immediately complied with. She was right. The old lady commenced : —

“I think, my dear, I have somewhere read, that the vulgar name of a great Italian poet was *Trapasso*; but when the learned Gravina resolved to devote the youth to the muses, he gave him one of a more mellifluous sound, which has long been known and cherished — *Metastasio*. Suggestions produced by the influence of names are involuntary, but the illusion they produce is stronger than we are at all aware of. One would suppose that Mrs. Barrington wished her daughter to grow up under the dominion of Romance, for the sound of ‘*Delphine*’ was never heard in the manor of Barrington until bestowed upon the young heiress, who, according to the will of an old doting grandmother, was to be of age at nineteen. Unfortunately for my poor friend, her father died while she was yet in infancy, and her vivid imagination was left to the culture of a mother, distinguished only by extreme weakness, and an inordinate share of vanity. Her childhood passed under the care of a governess, whose information was limited to what could be acquired from the perusal of a few French authors, of whom Rousseau was the most philosophic and the most profound; but who possessed so many accomplishments, and revelled in the appearance of so much sentiment, that *Delphine* loved and trusted her with all the trustfulness of her gentle and generous nature.

“Poor child! Much as she was petted and spoiled, there were times when she suffered, both from her mother’s weakness and the tyranny of her governess. The latter would sometimes punish her by solitary confinement in a turret room of the old manor-house: there she would sit; sometimes trembling at the wind, which howled amid the trees, or clattered the windows in their massive frames, but, more frequently, exerting those imaginative powers, which she possessed in an extraordinary degree, in the formation of tales and scenes of adventure, where the hero and heroine were beautiful, generous, with fine names, and, of course, unfortunate; while their enemies were ugly, mean, gifted with titles of frightful sound, and in power. You may smile, Myra; but a judicious parent would have brought such a child into contact with *facts*, would have destroyed her *Chateaux en Espagne*, not by apparent opposition, but by drawing her judgment into action, by making her acquainted with things.

“At seventeen, *Delphine* burst upon the fashionable London world, a miracle of beauty, a creature steeped to the very lips of romance, led away by excitement, and utterly unable to control her feelings, or to conceal them from society. Remember, that united to this temperament were generosity, affection, and, as I said before, the very highest ideas of perfection. She could make no allowance for little faults, and her conclusions were sweeping ones. In all matters of the imagination her knowledge might be called profound; but of the actual state of the world she knew less than a London boarding-school girl of thirteen. Her life might be termed a succession of smiles and tears. What would, to another, have been only a trifling inconvenience, was to her a source of real misery; and she was surrounded by many who encouraged these emotions, until an idea of suppressing them never entered into her thoughts.

“Her poor weak mother became terrified when she saw the flattering, fluttering tribe which beset the beautiful heiress. She fancied *Delphine* in danger, but she was in reality much safer than could have been supposed; she was protected by her delicacy — a delicacy as tender as the down on a butterfly’s wing, and which made her shrink from the thousand and one dangers that beset a modern girl of fashion. Good taste, with her, supplied, as it often does, the place of good principle; and, brought up as she had been, she would as soon, nay, sooner, have violated the one than the other. It so occurred, that among several who tendered heart and hand

was a Sir Lionel Leister, and, strange as it may appear, his first success was the consequence of his musical name. Lionel! could anything be more dulcet than the sound of Lionel? then Leister! he must have descended in some way or other from the house who flourished under the vain and wicked Elizabeth. His name did half the business. He was also handsome, well-bred, and generous. Older, to be sure, than herself by many years, but that only excited her veneration. She once heard him called *respectable*, that was a damper to heroics; but she got over it, when she discovered he had fought a duel, and swam twice across the Hellespont. 'What a good husband he will make,' said I to her one morning, when the marriage was arranged. 'I hope not,' she replied; 'there is something so tame about a good husband.' 'His temper appears excellent.' 'Temper!' she repeated, while a smile of disdain shot athwart her fine features — 'do you suppose I would for a moment think so meanly of a man as to consider his temper?' 'His estates are considerable!' 'Do you know, Constance,' she replied, after a pause, 'that is the chief thing which shadows my happiness. Oh that he were a beggar, the inhabitant of a cottage, that I might prove my love unto the world!' 'At all events, you are secure of his principles, for he is truly religious.' I saw it was, to use a most expressive phrase, 'on the tip of her tongue,' to reply, she did not like him the better for that; but Delphine had acquired an undefined sort of religious feeling, which bordered more on superstition than on that calm and holy affection for a merciful God, and an atoning Saviour, which Christians, properly so called, delight in. Yet that very superstition saved her from such an expression: her veneration was great — she respected whatever was distinguished in art, literature, or history; but respect, with her, savoured as much of romance as all her other passions — for everything she adopted became a passion; with Delphine the past and the future were forgotten in the present. She married Sir Lionel, and, at first, everything was *couleur de rose*; her very imagination appeared to have nothing to desire — it was impossible to be more blessed! Every one congratulated her, and she congratulated herself. Her husband, at first, was all devotion, all obedience; her every wish was anticipated; their united fortunes were splendid, and when did not the touch of gold convert all things into bliss? Palaces and cottages sprang from the earth at her desire. She founded schools — clothed her *élèves* in silk, and inwreathed their dwellings with roses: the little dirty children tore their pretty frocks, and destroyed the flowers — Delphine was disgusted, and the schools fell into unpicturesque ruins. Delphine wept over the ingratitude of the whole human race, and declared that, henceforth, she would shut her heart against all descriptions of charity. You perceive that, in this, as well as in many other instances, the fault was in herself: if we sow pearls in a bed that would produce roses, and expect, by so doing, to reap a pearly harvest, we must of necessity be disappointed. If the seed sown is not suited to the soil, the husbandman laboureth in vain."

"The land may be improved," said Myra, following on the old lady's train of fable.

"True, my dear; but that is the work of years, not months.

"Sir Lionel was a worthy, excellent man, yet he did not understand his wife: he was willing enough to subscribe to her fancies, but he could not enter into them. With the rapidity of lightning she passed from subject to subject, revelling in the exaggeration of sentiment, and accusing all of want of feeling who were not as fastidious as herself. A little dialogue, which I once heard between her and her husband, will illustrate her errors during the third year of her marriage.

"Delphine," said Sir Lionel, 'sing to us the *revue*.'

"The *revue*," she repeated, while moving towards her harp; 'I can-

not believe you have any feeling but dislike to that beautiful air. Why, you fell asleep the last time I sang it you !”

“ ‘ I was dreadfully tired, my love ; I am not as young as I was twenty years ago.’ ”

“ Delphine sung the air, sighing between each stanza.

“ ‘ Shall I sing you another, Sir Lionel ?’ ”

“ ‘ What is the matter with you ? Why do you always call me *Sir Lionel* ? And why ask me if you shall sing again, when you know how fond I am of music ?’ ”

“ ‘ You never appear *fond* of anything, I think. Why, you sent Cupid out of the room this morning.’ ”

“ ‘ My dear Delphine, I am sure I am fond of you ! I did send him, whom you call Cupid, to his nursery, because he squalled most confoundedly ; but I believe fathers are forgiven for not finding quite so much music in a child’s cry as a mother discovers ; but what is the matter with you ? Has your favourite preacher discovered hypocrisy, or has your French maid fulfilled my prophecy, and married the groom ?’ ”

“ ‘ Odious ! — No !’ ”

“ ‘ Are the Java sparrows dead ?’ ”

“ ‘ Cruel ! — No !’ ”

“ ‘ Have any of your fair friends proved perfidious ; and are you the victim of a delicate misunderstanding ?’ ”

“ ‘ It may be very amusing to you to laugh at my unfortunate susceptibility, Sir Lionel ; but if you cannot (happily for yourself) feel as I do, it is not, I hope, too much to expect, that you will cease to turn me into ridicule.’ ”

“ ‘ Me !’ ”

“ ‘ Yes ! Is it not sufficiently distressing that I perceive your affection alienated — torn from me ? yet you delight in exhibiting that alienation to the whole world.’ ”

“ She burst into a flood of tears. Nothing is so painful as to be present at a domestic quarrel ; and I was about to retire, when Sir Lionel left the room.

“ ‘ You see !’ she exclaimed, ‘ his affections are quite estranged ; he would not have left me thus before our marriage.’ ”

“ ‘ Probably not. You must excuse me, my dear friend, but it is evident to me you do not take into consideration that Sir Lionel, excellent, worthy as he is, is, nevertheless, a man without sentiment or imagination ; consequently, you have no right to expect from him the minute attentions to those little points in your character which you regard so highly, and which he does not regard at all. His moral conduct is irreproachable.’ ”

“ ‘ I had rather he had a thousand faults ; for then I could prove my generosity by forgiving them !’ ”

“ ‘ He is just, generous, and respected by all who know him.’ ”

“ ‘ Granted ; but he has no heart !’ ”

“ ‘ He is more at home, even when in London, than half the men of my acquaintance ; seldom at the clubs, and —’ ”

“ ‘ Clubs !’ repeated Delphine ; ‘ the name of club has been the death-knell to female comfort. Where are the young men of fashion and intellect to be found ? — at the club ! Where do men of literature fritter and dissipate their time ? — at the club ! What fascinates a married man and wiles him from his home ? — the club ! I succeeded in obtaining a promise from my husband that he would never invite any member of a club to his house.’ ”

“ ‘ An exceedingly foolish act ; because you cut him off from his most pleasant acquaintances, whom, as he could not see at home, he sought abroad. I will go all lengths with you in censuring clubs, but we would

differ as to our method of suppressing them. Indeed, Delphine, if you managed your husband properly, you might be—

"She would not suffer me to finish my sentence, but repeated—*'Manage!—Manage my husband! Can you think so meanly of me, that I would condescend to manage!—What, wile him to an object!—No!—I will oppose him whenever I think him in error; but—Manage!—We will talk no more upon the subject. I am a poor desolate creature, distinguished by splendid misery, and more alone in my magnificence, more miserable amid sculpture, and paintings, and gold, than the beggar who supplicates at my gate for food. Yet you, Constance, remember when my heart was warm and open, and when I formed plans for the good of my fellow-beings, and for the happiness of that very man who is now my curse!'*

"She buried her face in her hands, and wept long and bitterly. You may be well assured that I reasoned, argued, and prayed with her, until my own spirits began to fail beneath the exertion. It was useless all! and it is ever useless to argue with people who reply by their feelings, not their reason. Poor thing! she was casting the blessings of the Almighty from her; she was labouring for her own misery and the misery of others. Sir Lionel was one of those upright, honest, sober, straightforward characters, who are so firmly convinced of the rectitude of their own principles, that they become obstinate, while they only think they are firm. Whenever a sensible woman has one of those worthy sort of men to deal with, let her begin as she means to continue—not yielding too much at first; for whatever habit he adopts during the honey-moon, he will continue; and let her expect as much as she pleases from his justice, but as little as possible from his generosity. After all, these are the best husbands; for they remain firm to their principles, and are ever ready to acknowledge the *mental* beauty, which a wise woman will always have in reserve by the time her personal attractions are on the decline.

"*'I am grieved,'* he would say to me, *'that Delphine is so completely the slave of her fancies; but you cannot expect me to feel for her as if her misfortunes were real.'*

"*'But they are real to her, in six cases out of seven; it is the estimation in which we hold things that stamps their import with us. You cannot reason her out of her conceits; you can only turn the course of her ideas, direct her feelings into another channel, and—'*

"*'But why not reason?'* he interrupted; *'surely you do not mean that Delphine is not a reasonable being?'*

"*'Certainly not; but I mean that her reason is so overgrown by her imagination, that, until that imagination is worn down by being directed to facts, not feelings, she is unable to exercise, or even appreciate, the quality you lay so much stress upon; her mental education has been one of error; her mind has been grossly mismanaged, and she is only an infant, as far as her reason is concerned.'*

"Sir Lionel looked, as he really was, sorely perplexed; and wished, from his heart, that he had remained in a state of single blessedness. *'She ought to remember,'* he said, after a pause, *'that I am too old to humour her fancies.'* I had little more to say to a man, however kind, excellent, and even wise he might be on other topics, who pleaded his years of fifty, to a woman of twenty, as an *excuse* for his not comprehending the delicate shades of romance! And yet, how little women consider difference of age in matters of the affections; there is an innate sensuality in mankind, which prevents their ever knowing, and seldom valuing, the depths and the earnest purity of woman's love! Poor Delphine! her peace continued unrestored, her imagination uncurbed; and, in the midst of affluence, she surrounded herself with acute suffering:—she constantly reminded me of those devotees

of superstition, who inflict scourgings and wounds upon themselves, and fancy they are called to this self-torture by a benevolent and merciful God.

"It would appear, even to you, Myra, overstrained and impossible, if I were to recount a tythe of her miseries; how, though young and beautiful, her husband became estranged; and how, with all the warmth and generosity so essential in the formation of friendship, her friends fell from around her, like leaves from off the trees of autumn; for she was perpetually taking offence at imaginary wrongs, and thus effacing impressions which, if at all under the dominion of reason, she would have sought to preserve and sanctify within her soul. Her children (she had three) she was, of course, most unfitted to manage or direct; and, as she selected their governess for some ideal qualifications, the poor little creatures were left to the mismanagement of fashionable servants. I must do Sir Lionel the justice to say, that, after endeavouring in vain to convince Delphine of her error with respect to their offspring, he removed the two eldest from the contagion of her example. Yet, necessary as this was, it almost broke her heart. I had been on the Continent for nearly four years; when I returned, they, or rather she, was living in Upper Brook Street, and as her mind, unsatisfied at home, sought excitement abroad, I found that she had, during the last season, dashed wildly into the gayeties of the second class of London society: the bloom upon her beautiful cheek was false, but the smile upon her quivering lip was false still. She had become a patroness of art and literature, and, unfortunately for the dignity of both, there are those who submit to such dominion, and pay it in the coin of flattery and meanness. Yet Delphine — poor Delphine! was still in earnest, and in earnest too, in expecting that those whom she *flattered* and caressed, would regard and cherish — *her reputation!* Sad is the condition of that woman whose reputation requires defence! better a thousand times, she should lay down her head and die, than raise it up and live to breathe the air which calumny has breathed upon. Oh, that some lawgiver would rise among us, and make clear the path which is beset by dangers for any woman who steps from off the threshold of her own door: much is there to lure her forth, and yet, if *once* she leaves the sanctuary, she can no more return!

"There were rumours abroad that Delphine had become a philosopher; and murmurs and wonders, and hints and exclamations, and lampoons; and Delphine so far forgot her delicacy as to laugh at them. She even pretended to patronise a caricature of herself, which she must have longed to tear to pieces. I did this — before a parcel of sycophants who were lauding her 'sweetness and generosity in permitting the vile thing to remain on the table of her saloon' — I tore it, and trampled it beneath my feet; nor did I heed the titters and smiles of the hundred, who regretted its destruction, because, within their own hearts, they delighted to see her defamed.

"Delphine, I found, though she had mixed much in, had nothing increased her knowledge of, the world. She was as one who sees visions, and dreams dreams; she lived only in excitement — a state of existence the most destructive to reason. I am never in real dread of a woman falling into error, *until she begins to despise the opinion of the world.* Love of approbation supplies the place of many virtues; but I did tremble for Delphine when I heard her speak of intimates, whom the good, the honourable, and the virtuous named not. I inquired for her husband — 'He was shooting at Lord R.'s, and was never at home.' For her children — the youngest was up stairs, asleep; I should see it after the company had departed. And I did see it! When all were gone, and we were left alone, she hurried, as much, I thought, from a desire to escape from me and from herself, as from maternal tenderness, to the chamber of her sleeping boy. She flung herself upon her knees by its couch — she buried her face in its pillow — and

she sobbed long and bitterly; then, craving a pardon she need not have desired, for my heart wept with her, the first words of unpolled truth I had heard her utter that night, burst from her lips, as, with a long-drawn sigh, while gazing on the child, the tears still glittering on her cheeks, she exclaimed — ‘And yet, I am happier now than I have been all night!’

“There spoke nature’s honest triumph. She was happier *there*, gazing on her boy, than in her perfumed rooms, where flattery gilded sin.”

The old lady paused; the knitting-needles ceased to glitter in her fingers; she stooped, as if to pick up a handkerchief, which was not on the ground; and finally turned away to hide her tears. At last, she continued —

“And yet, the next morning, word was brought to me, that she had, under some new and sudden impulse, deserted that very child — betrayed her husband’s honour, and sacrificed her own — and left a letter for me, full of a cant of philosophy, about her being convinced that, as she detested Sir Lionel, she should not again meet him; that he had promised her he would suffer her to pursue, unmolested, her own course; and yet she had just learned that it was his intention to return the next morning; with much more, that I would not repeat if I could, about the union of hearts, and the sympathy of souls. To think that any free-born spirit would descend so low as to confess that reason is not stronger far than what they madly term their destiny! — To suppose that the Almighty would breathe the essence of himself into our bodies, and yet not give us strength to withstand evil, if we but wield the right weapons which overcome iniquity!

“I went to the house, and I shall never forget the appearance of her husband. He had always placed the most implicit confidence in her honour, wild and far-fetched as he knew were her theories and her practices: still he would not believe that she ever meditated guilt; nor do I believe she did; it took her unawares, but he should the more have guarded against it. He sat in that splendid saloon, where all remained in the confusion of the last night’s revel, and the bright light of the glorious sun putting to shame the disorder of the whole. His head bent to the earth, while he strained his child to his bosom, who, terrified at his emotions, conscious that his mamma was gone, and his papa returned, and that some terrible calamity had overwhelmed them, remained pale and passive within his grasp. It was an awful picture! — the struggles of that upright and honourable man to restrain his feelings, to appear calm and dignified under the heaviest calamity which can befall a created being. He stood up to receive me, but he could not speak. I perceived that he had taken her picture from its frame, and cut it into shreds. When he let the boy escape from his arms, and made some efforts at conversation, the poor child picked up the fragments, and placed them together: his father perceived his occupation, and, snatching him to his bosom, shed an abundance of tears, the first he had shed since his bereavement.

“How agonizing it is to see a man shed tears! Women seem in some degree born for weeping; but, in men, it appears a convulsion too painful to look upon. Then, when he opened his heart to me upon the subject — when he spoke of the breadth and depth and richness of his love for her, who had, within so short a time, set his name as a mark for scorn — I felt how utterly her mind must have been perverted, not to have set such a man’s perfections against his peculiarities, and lived with him a happy and blameless life. The hand of affliction was on him, and, though he felt his shame, he began to brave it nobly — he rose above it; and instead of threatening her with the thunders of his wrath, he spoke to me about the best means of withdrawing her from vice, and placing her in a safe retreat, where the scoffs of the world should not molest her.

“How will she, who shrank from imaginary evil, be able to sustain

herself against what she must now endure?" he said. "When we were married, she, with her usual liberality, would reserve no portion of her estates in her own hands; but she shall want for nothing." And then he conjured me to seek her out; breathing at one time tenderness, at another horror for her abandonment; and manifesting more feeling, more generosity, than I could have believed he possessed.

"How much excellence is shut up in human hearts, which the key of circumstance never unlocks. I should not have known the virtues of Sir Lionel Leister, but for his misfortune; and, as it was, no other saw into his soul. The world—the cruel world—laughed at him; and why? because his head was gray! Alas! the greenness of the heart will make the head white before its years are many: the unfeeling have few gray hairs."

"It is a strange record, but that same night the penitent Delphine, of herself, sought the protection of my roof. She had only tasted of the cup of sin, but the taste was so bitter that she dashed it from her lips. She forsook the man who, with keen and subtle cunning, betrayed her to destruction;—she forsook him the instant she discovered his unworthiness;—she cast from her the affection that had grown in her heart, and the strength of which she had no conception of until her fatal error, to which, as usual, she was hurried by her unrestrained imagination. When this man had, as he thought, obtained the greatest dominion over her—when he fancied that, having passed the Rubicon, she dared not retreat—then, and not till then, did he permit her to see the sordid and sensual quality of his mind; and, with the conviction of his unworthiness, came her determination to abandon him on the instant."

"How did you receive her?" inquired Myra.

"You know," answered the old lady, quietly, "what our REDEEMER said to one who, when He commenced speaking, had not even forsaken the evil of her ways. I hope I am a follower of his."

"And her husband?"

"He could not receive her as his wife, nor did she desire it; and yet he endeavoured to shield her from the world—from its reproaches and its scorn. Had Sir Lionel preached a thousand sermons to Delphine, he could not have convinced her so thoroughly of the advantage of reason, and the blessings that must always arise from the exercise of a well-directed mind. Now that, by her own act, she had deprived herself *for ever* of his countenance and society, she became sensible of his excellence; and her mind, still prone to run into extremes, exaggerated the very perfections whose existence, a little time before, she had denied. The qualities for which she had at first loved him had their origin in her imagination, but now she learned to appreciate those which he really possessed. It was heart-rending to witness her remorse, particularly when informed that her children could not be permitted even to visit her.

"The only chance they have of escaping the bitterness I now feel," said Sir Lionel, "is by keeping them apart from their mother. I will never subject *them* to the consciousness of their disgrace by a public appeal to the laws of my country. By such a course, though a villain remains unpunished, *her* name will escape being handed down to posterity with the mark of shame labelled upon what has hitherto been unspotted."

"I sat days and days, and nights and nights, with Delphine. Could I record for you her penitence, her agonies, her tears, you would accuse me of exaggeration—you would hardly believe it possible that human nature could endure such suffering and live. Owing to the generous behaviour of her husband, and from the circumstance of her seeking the protection of my house in little more than twenty-four hours after her disappearance from her own, 'the affair of Lady Leister' was soon generally forgotten; a few weeks

after, an elopement of much more decided character set the talkers talking on a new theme of exciting interest. After the first burst of curiosity, it was delicately whispered about by her *'kind and intimate friends;'* and certain gentlemen of the long robe were astonished at the husband's forbearance; while others, who liked her ladyship's parties, and had often the loan of her box at the theatres, wondered and surmised how she would be again received into society.

"The violent agitation of her feelings brought on brain fever, and then, during the long night watches, and in the strongest paroxysms of the disease, Sir Lionel would steal into her chamber, apply the ice to her fevered brain, and the cup to her burning lip; but, before she recovered, his gray hair had become white, and, calm and unromantic though he was, I saw, and saw truly, that he was hastening to his grave. He commanded me never to let her know who had ministered to her during her mind's wanderings; and I kept my word; but she needed not that proof of his tenderness to increase her repentance, which was deep and genuine; indeed, whatever Delphine's faults had been, she was incapable of deception. Her soul, though full of error, was above the pettiness of little faults, and she fearlessly pursued her career, whether of good or evil, without wishing to conceal either her progress or her object; the latter was frequently unknown to herself, for she was perpetually vacillating from one passion to another.

"For some time after that fearful illness, however, her mind seemed impregnated with but one idea; it haunted her dreams, it pursued her by day, and embittered all her comforts. She had retired to the country, and her affectionate heart sought, amid trees, and birds, and flowers, things to commune with and love; but still it returned to its own bitterness: the budding trees reminded her of those young blossoms of eternity which had sprung from herself, but whom now she could neither foster nor protect. 'The birds,' she would say, 'may feed their offspring and teach their wings to soar; but when, hereafter, my children look me in the face, they will not know their mother!'

"I have said that Sir Lionel was hastening to his grave. His mind had not the elasticity of hers; if his feelings were less acute, they were the more continued. He had no bursts of grief, but the iron had at once entered into his soul; and, after the course of a few months, we heard he was dying at Leister Park. Delphine, when the intelligence reached her, became almost frantic with grief. The night was fierce and tempestuous, and brilliant lightning swept athwart the sky; yet she ordered the carriage on the instant, and set forth, amid the war of elements, that she might receive his forgiveness from his own lips: — she little knew how fully it had been bestowed, when he prayed beside her during her unconscious ravings. You know how steep and dangerous is the hill which leads to the park gates; the horses took fright as they descended, and we were both thrown out, providentially without sustaining any injury. She heeded neither the accident nor the storm, but continued her way on foot to where the moving lights, and the crowded, yet silent rooms, told too plainly what was anticipated.

"She pressed my arm closely to her heart when the astonished porter opened the portal to a mistress he had not seen for two years. 'Ask! ask!' she murmured, in a low, thick voice, 'I cannot.' 'Sir Lionel —' I said, and could say no more.

"'He still lives,' was the reply; and in an instant she glided past me, and I saw her sitting like a shadow up the marble stairs. In less time than I can describe it, came a long and piercing scream, so piercing that the old servant clasped his hands, and exclaimed, 'It is over!' And so it was. Her husband's breath departed as she burst into the chamber, and I found her arms inwreathed around his neck. Will you believe that he who

sought to disengage those arms from that embrace was her own son, her eldest born ! and that when she would have kissed his cheek, as we were bearing her from the house, he turned it from her lips !”

“Poor Delphine !” ejaculated Myra. “Her imaginary troubles had been converted into trials of the bitterest kind.”

“True,” replied her aunt, “but with my old friendship, warmer about my heart than its own life-blood, I see how completely the cup was of her own mixing ; and I have told her story to very little purpose, if you do not perceive how her trials, from their commencement, originated in an unrestricted imagination.”

“What a pity that such a mind should not have been well directed.”

“True, indeed. Parents, who have female children to launch into the world, would do well to remember that, as women’s trials are of the affections, it becomes only the more necessary to direct those affections into proper channels.”

“But, dear aunt,” continued Myra, “Delphine was then young, and she is now old ; is there nothing more to tell ? I suppose she was quite cured of her romance ? and I want to know about her children ; besides, I have always heard her called Mrs. Barrington, not Lady Leister.”

“Delphine was certainly young when she became a widow, and she found that Sir Lionel had returned to her the half of her fortune, settling the other half upon her daughter, their second child, but from which Miss Leister was to derive no advantage until she was five and twenty. Your other question, Myra, savours of thoughtlessness ; it was, ‘Is there nothing more to tell ?’ as if a single leaf in the book of life could be turned over by the finger of time, and present *nothing* but a blank page, to eternity. Alas ! the hours, the minutes of our lives are big with incident ; the fruits of past, the flowers of coming, years—the hopes, the fears, the sighs, the smiles—the unrecorded, but not unfelt, impurities of our nature—the evil struggling with the good—who would dare to read the faithful record of their own heart’s thoughts if they could have been recorded !

“‘Nothing !’ What fools men were to coin us such a word ; a word that Nature knows not of, that Time does not acknowledge. As if there were a vacuum in air, or space, or aught that the Almighty made. ‘Tis a fool’s word !”

Myra could not help smiling at the sudden earnestness of her aunt ; and the old lady continued, in a more sober strain :—

“It is not easy, Myra, to be *cured*, as you call it, of a habit, which has been sown in infancy, cherished for years, and which has impregnated all our qualities with its essence: the sentiments discover the colour of their original tincture, and reason finds it more difficult to deal with habit than with aught else. It is no easy matter to determine what portions of our own character we overrate ; so as to separate the good from the bad. If I wanted to make up a history, I might enlarge upon her reformation, and talk of her miraculous conversion, and how she settled into a reasoning and reasonable woman ; but then I should be untrue to human nature : it is far more difficult to change the current of the mind than is generally imagined. Delphine went abroad ; she gained information, and her deep and bitter trials had sobered, but not *destroyed*, an imagination which, even when sobered, was still too vivid. Her thirst for excitement returned as time silently and slowly passed the thickening veil of years over past events. She became as one of the olden time ; she existed only in the memory of past ages ; and she amused many of her leisure hours in proving that the crimes, so called, of those of the antediluvian world, were only an exaggeration of virtue. The singularity of her opinions, her rare beauty, her manners and conversation, the extent of her information, and, above all, the tone of melancholy which, emanating from her heart, thrilled its

cadences through her frame, made her so much an object of interest abroad, that she returned to England laden with a reputation for talents and accomplishments which few women ever acquire. But our country-folk have, unfortunately, a prejudice against all who acquire celebrity in a foreign land; and I have never known an instance of one greatly admired at the court of France, or sung of in the land of sunny Italy, being favoured in England. I do not speak of *public* favourites, but of those who may be, with more propriety, termed private ones.

"I think Delphine had hoped that her errors would have been forgotten, and that she might, at least, have held the first place among the *savans* of her own sex; but, whatever the men were disposed to do, the women could not forgive her for the possession of wit and beauty; but for these two qualities, she might, at the age of five and forty, have 'played at cards and died' in the self-same coterie she once belonged to!"

"What!" exclaimed Myra, "you, who profess so earnestly to be the friend of your own sex, have I caught you satirizing?"

"Friendship makes me *feel* for, but does not *blind* me to, the failings of those I love. Nine women out of ten (and I have made my calculation with rare arithmetical precision) would sooner forgive a woman for frailty, than for the sin of beauty, or the greater sin of wit; and why? because their own minds have been crushed, and they are taught to dread whatever is not strictly conventional. Delphine was thrown back either upon male society — where she could have dictated laws, and, even at that age, was admired for her loveliness — or upon her own resources, and the friendship of two or three old women like myself, whose rank and age made them the fearless rulers of their own actions: she chose the latter, and is, I think, satisfied. Her sons are abroad in the world; and, which I believe I stated before, as she resumed her maiden name when she felt how she had degraded her husband's ancient title, they felt absolved from paying her any attention.

"It was only last season that Delphine and myself went to the opera to hear Grisi, whose grace captivates more than her melody. You have heard me say how passionately she loves music; and as it is *the music*, and not *the monde*, she wishes to enter into, she invariably seats herself at the back of the box. Once or twice during the performance she leaned forward; and, as the ballet had commenced, we were about retiring, when our door opened, and a young lady rushed in, and threw herself on my poor friend's bosom.

"It was her daughter!"

"She had gathered from some conversation which took place between her guardian and her *chaperone*, that her mother was in the box next to the one they occupied, and notwithstanding the prohibition which had been adhered to for years, the affectionate creature watched for an opportunity to look upon that parent whom she loved with an enthusiasm which savoured strongly of her mother. 'And you are my mother!' she repeated, after indulging in a long embrace — 'and you are my mother — my own, own mother! — and you are so beautiful! — my mother! — my own, own mother!' — and she gazed on her with an earnestness that drew tears from her guardian's eyes, who, thunderstruck at her impetuosity, had entered soon after. His manner speedily froze into politeness; he possessed power, and I could not condemn him for exercising it. They wept long and bitterly in each other's arms — they wept unseen except by Miss Leister's guardian and myself. There was a *festa*, and a ballet of gorgeous magnificence upon the stage, and cries of, 'Bravo!' thundered to the roof; yet, within a narrow space, there was a depth, an intensity of agony, which you may feel, but I cannot describe. At last nature yielded to the struggle, and the poor girl fainted. 'Take her away now, sir,' said Delphine; 'I know I am unworthy, and will not attempt anything that would be at variance with her

father's will. May God so bless and reward you, as you deal justice to that lonely girl!

"I perceive," she added, "she is cursed with her mother's susceptibility; I would almost sooner see her in her grave!"

"Alas! that poor girl is now dying of incipient consumption, and yet they will not suffer her mother to watch by her bed-side, or to pay her more than a half-hour's visit! This, to a mother, Myra, is no imaginary trial."

"It is a fearful lesson!" sighed Myra; "I would not pursue it farther. What if the girl should die?"

"God's will be done!" replied the old lady, meekly; "I wish I could read aloud to the world all the examples I have noted of great and glorious women, lost for ever to society, through the defects of education. A judicious husbandman watches the culture of the plant, the soundness of the root, and then knows what he has to look forward to; while we, poor labourers in the moral garden, expect strength from the willow, and docility from the oak. Women are all educated with reference to fashion, which multiplies their trials by diminishing their strength; and —"

The old lady was interrupted by the receipt of a letter from Delphine, which she did not read without many tears.

"It is over! My daughter is dead! Feel for me, weep for me, pray for me — my friend! You, who knew me in the days of my unsubdued youth, pray for me! You, who knew me during the reign of my uncontrolled imagination, pray for me! You, who knew me when I breathed only incense, and heard no voice but the voice of flattery, pray for me! You, who knew me a spotless wife and a joyful mother, pray for me! You, who knew and sought to dispel the clouds with which folly and fashion obscured my days, pray for me! You, who saved me from the depths of despair, and received a polluted creature into the sanctuary of your pure home, pray for me! Pray for me, now and always! but especially now, when my child is dead. She lies before me at this moment — there! Those arms which intertwined around me on *that* night, when first she called me '*mother*' — the sweetest music I had ever heard; those arms will never, *never* again press a fallen mother, but still a *mother*, to that bosom! Oh, if they had only suffered me to remain with her during the last week, it would have been enough! but they would not: it was the deepest of all my humiliations. They could not think that the most depraved being who ever existed could contaminate its own child! But I have no right to murmur. It has been ordained that the residue of a woman's life, though it be steeped in tears, cannot atone for one, only one, fault!

"Forgive me, my friend, I would not repine, yet Nature heaves within me, when I remember how she entreated that I might be suffered to remain with her. Did I say I had only one fault, one crime to atone for! Alas! my whole life has been a tissue of faults; and, above all, the great one, the greatest of the whole, that I misused the talents God had given me; and, instead of becoming distinguished for all that should make woman like the eastern perfume, whose fragrance increases the longer it exists, I have been —

"Heaven preserve me! I thought the pale corpse sighed!

"Oh! spirit of my child! look on thy erring mother, and, if it be permitted, meet her when death shall separate, what *might have been* a glorious spirit, from earth's passions and earth's clay! Did I write — '*glorious spirit*' — I wrote even as the heathen did. Humility is the Christian's glory, and faith his shield. Shield me, O faith! from my own pride, and humble me to the cross which was borne by an atoning Saviour.

"How beautiful she looks! — they have left us quite alone. Her mother is trusted at last — with what? the ashes of her child! My husband meant not this — he could not mean it!

"Come to me, my friend; this death-bed has no terror! Young and beautiful, she smiles at what philosophers and kings tremble but to think upon. I would fain be thankful that she is gone; if she had lived, the cruel world, perhaps a heartless husband, might have called her mother — what she was! it would have killed the gentle child; or she might have lived to suffer, as I have suffered!

"Come; — we can sit together here, and talk of time and of eternity; and you shall reason me to what you will. Constance, my heart is broken; it lies *there*, within her shroud, buried in her bosom! Will you believe that my ambition breathed new life, when I thought on what she would be; and, though cut off from her society, I planned, and planned, and triumphed in her triumphs! My imagination was at work as for myself; and the visions of my youth returned again! Can you forgive me this? — it is a frank confession.

"Come to me, and, as you have often done extract wisdom from affliction!"

THE END.

REAL LIFE.

PAGES FROM THE PORTFOLIO

OF A

CHRONICLER.

"Though various wishes, hopes, and fears
Fevered the progress of these years;
Yet now, days, weeks, and months may seem
The recollection of a dream;
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity."

Scott's Marmion.

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TO THE READER.

THIRTEEN years ago, when on my way to join my regiment, then on the point of embarking at Portsmouth for India, I stopped one night at a very small country inn, not a hundred miles from Fort William. Here I not only slept, but *over-slept* myself; so that it was with no small "hubble bubble, toil and trouble," mingled with many an execration of my black-fellow, who had neglected to wake me at the proper hour in the morning, that I got myself and my luggage under weigh at the needful hour.

Several days after we had sailed from Portsmouth, on opening one of my trunks, I was puzzled to find in it a large, rather much-worn portfolio, which I knew did not belong to me. "What is that, or where did it come from?" said I to Yorick. "Why, Massa, Yorick do n't know. It was on de table in de room where you sleep at —, lying under Massa's desk, so Yorick put it in trunk too."

After bestowing a few pithy epithets upon this most sensible of servants, I ceased to think of the portfolio — till weeks after, when weary of the monotony of a long voyage, it occurred to me as a possible source of mischievous diversion to myself and my brother officers.

We accordingly turned out its contents, and I can appeal to the many, still living, who partook in the amusement they furnished on board the *S——le*, if they ever can forget the bright summer evenings spent in their perusal?

They consisted of detached portions of a journal, which appeared to have been regularly kept for a considerable length of time; in which the parts now given to the public were mingled with many matters of mere family interest, or private feeling. The names of persons and places were given at full length; and I can vouch for the perfect accuracy with which the anecdotes are related, and the characters portrayed; for in "*Simon's Panorama*," (the name we gave the portfolio,) many of us recognised, sometimes with much astonishment, friends, acquaintances, and *relatives*.

On my return from India, after an absence of eleven years, I wrote to Simon, stating the manner in which I had become possessed of the portfolio, and requesting to know how I could restore it to its rightful owner. My letter was returned, marked, "No such person to be found." I was not to be thus balked. By the aid of an almanac I found out the name of the parish clergyman; and from him, in reply to a letter which I had addressed to him upon the subject, I

learned with regret, that Simon was gathered to his fathers some years ago; and so was his son-in-law, whom I supposed to be the writer of the papers. I really felt as if I had lost an old and intimate friend, — so familiar had my mind become with the idea of Simon, his poney-cart, and his preaching propensities. Thus left, as it were, *heir of the portfolio*, I have been tempted to employ the hours of a tedious convalescence in preparing a part of its contents for the public; hoping that its supreme *fiat* may confirm the opinion which I have formed, that they are highly calculated to be useful in that rank of life to which they more particularly address themselves.

Indeed, were all, high and low, rich and poor, to lay Simon's homely advices to heart, we should become a greater, a more contented, and a more prosperous, because we should be a more virtuous, people than we can at present boast ourselves.

I have endeavoured to save private feelings as much as possible, by suppressing or altering the names of persons who figure in "Simon's Panorama;" though, no doubt, some there are who will recognise *themselves*, even under a feigned name.

I am well aware that Simon occasionally prosés. But really, all that he says is dictated by such sound good sense and excellent principle, that I could not always persuade myself to curtail him, even though I did feel a little fretted at the length of his exhortations; and I comfort myself with this, that those who weary of them can pass them over; and those who follow them will never need to complain that they have wasted their time.

THE HEIR OF THE PORTFOLIO.

ANECDOTES

OF

THE LIVING AND OF THE DEAD.

MY EARLY DAYS.

My first recollections of life are those of misery.—My mother lying on her bed sobbing in wild grief—the house dark and desolate—my little sister and myself cold and hungry, and wailing, we knew not why; and no one caring for us. Perhaps all our distinct recollections of early life resemble pictures. They represent but one instant of time; and let us look back on them when we may, we always see the same people in exactly the same attitudes, the same dresses, the same expressions of face. At this moment, while I write, I see my mother stretched in an agony of grief upon the bed. I hear the convulsive fetches of her breath. I see the confused dreary apartment—the grate full of ashes, and no fire—an unwashed pan upon the hearth, with the lid half off, and covered with dust—a beam of cold pale light glinting down the chimney upon bits of broken plaster and half-burnt sticks; and think I yet feel the cold, damp, sooty air blow on my cheek. This last impression is so strong that I have never since felt the same dismal blast but I thought it the very smell of desolation and despair.

The next picture that memory has presented is my mother sitting with her motionless wheel before her pale and motionless figure; her eyes gazing on vacancy, and the untwined thread suspended in her fingers. I see the outer door open slowly and softly, and light from a little black cruize, which hung near the fire, fall full on the benevolent countenance and the high white unwrinkled brow of Simon the travelling merchant. He stood there a moment, looking on my mother, who did not perceive him. I see him still in my mind's eye stepping gently and silently into the house, and hear my mother's wild scream when she at length observed him. He sat down by her, spoke to her kindly, and took my poor little alarmed and bewildered sister and myself on his knees, caressing us and giving us gingerbread from his great pocket. Few people are aware of the value of kindness of manner to a child, or how deeply a fond look, or word, or kiss, sinks into their little warm hearts in such situations as we then were. I was too young to understand what Simon or my mother were saying; but I remember her face turned upon us, her large dark eyes widely opened, and in a tone of agony uttering the words, "Wretched orphans." I did not know what that meant, but guessed it to be something very frightful. The slight and scattered glimpses of light thrown by my memory on a time so long past, only enable me to recollect, that from that night we were never again so unhappy. Simon saw my mother again, comforted her, and she began to work busily, and was once more occupied with the care of my sister and myself.

I now know that this dear mother was married, when a mere girl, to a

young sailor, and that he perished in a great naval engagement, leaving an orphan widow, under twenty years of age, with two infant orphans to support. Simon had been at a distance when the news of our misfortune arrived; but, on returning to his home, not far from ours, immediately came to pour the blessed balm of at once heavenly and earthly consolation into the wounded heart. He arranged plans with my mother for her future comfort and conduct, procured the arrears of my father's pay and prize-money, and, through his vivid representations of our case to some of the neighbouring gentry, obtained a small pension for the brave young sailor's widow and orphans. I remember him arriving one sunny morning with a pick and spade over his shoulder, and a great bundle of willow slips under his arm, to put the little yard belonging to our lonely hut in order, and to mend its fence. He always took me along with him to all such pieces of work; taught me to be useful and careful; to weed and to water the new planted hail and willows, and the new sown turnips; to pick up all sticks, and stones, and litter; and to exert my almost infant strength and activity at once agreeably and usefully. He spoke to me continually; gave me encouragement and applause for all my little feats of ingenuity or agility, and, above all, for any traits of consideration or exertion of thought and reason that I chanced to display. My mother did not sit idle while another was working for her. With great natural abilities, sound sense, and a true independent Scottish heart, joined to much docility, she soon roused herself from the apathy of despair into which she was sinking at the time Simon came to see her. She worked incessantly and usefully; and the worthy man, delighted to find his endeavours to serve her crowned with such success, redoubled his kindness and affection. He brought my sister a weaned calf, which he called her tocher. This she and I concluded was the name of the animal, and it never after got any other. This calf proved the source of wealth to the whole family, and set us completely above want.

After his return from every journey, Simon came to see us, and was ever the forerunner of joy and comfort. His very looks, his mere presence, was comfort. But, besides, he always found something in each to praise and approve. He had always something to show, or tell, or teach; and he set every thing to rights that was beyond our skill or strength. He taught me to plait and then prune the willow fence, and to make baskets of the prunings, — a most useful lesson, and easily learned. He also taught me another still easier and as useful, — it was, never to leave litter of any kind at my heels, but to carry at once every sort of rubbish to its own proper place. Stones he heaped in one unoccupied corner, there to lie till they were needed. Weeds, sticks, stalks, and blades were all laid in another heap to decay, and afterwards to be used as manure. "Child," he said, "put nothing to waste; every thing on earth has its use. Only teach yourself betimes to keep every thing where it ought to be, and you will know where to find it; and there will be neither confusion, nor waste, nor time lost, breaking your bones tumbling over rubbish, or hunting for what is destroyed through want of order." My mother had brought us up in such perfect obedience, from the earliest hours of our existence, that contention and discontent were utterly unknown in the house. No-scolding — no punishments; my sister and I had not an idea or a wish but to do instantly what we were desired. Thus we were easily taught; and I learned to read so early, and so gradually, and with so little trouble, that I scarcely remember when or how it was; but it is associated in my memory with my mother's love and caresses. And both my sister and I love reading. And I remember when a neighbour was wondering to see us reading of our own free will, because her own children never would read a word unless she thrashed them to it; my mother cried out to her, "Oh, woman! is that the way ye tak' to gar your bairns like their books? Could ye like your very meat or your sleep

yourself, if ye never got them but wi' a threshing? Would ye like them, or *them* that threshed you?" "Weel I wot, no!" replied her visiter. But logic avails little in counteracting the habit of thrashing; and the good woman would probably go home and doubly thrash her children because I was fond of reading.

Another thing I cannot remember, — that is, a time when I was unacquainted with the first principles of religion; I mean, that there is an all-powerful, unseen Being, who made whatever I saw on the earth and in the sky, and who is the Preserver of all who love and serve him. Him my mother taught my little sister and myself to think of at all times with the deepest reverence and love, as the Author of all our blessings. She pressed upon our infant hearts the necessity of remembering that this great Spirit was for ever present, though not seen by us, and to dread doing anything wrong, though no mortal eye was near us, because we were ever seen by Him, who knew not only all we did, but all we thought. We, night and morning, in a few simple words, addressed to Him our infant adorations; and in all our childish griefs and troubles, to him we habitually lifted up our little hearts and hands for help. Oh, I yet remember, on that day of my earliest wretchedness, when bewildered and terrified by my mother's grief, that I tried to pray for her and my father, then in his ocean grave!

It seems to me that I can look back on a very long period of time in which Simon was our active and never-failing friend. But I can give no narrative of those years, even were the life of a herd-boy likely to afford subjects for narration. Simon provided me with books to read, when, with no companion but my dog, I was at my lonely occupation of herding cattle, sent out to graze among ill-fenced fields: and at night I attended with my sister a school, where we learned writing and arithmetic. The praises of my master awakened many ambitious feelings in my mind, and these might have led to much mischief, but Simon soon after took me as his servant to learn farm work; and in the intervals of his journeys, perhaps perceiving the aspirings of my heart, took occasion to tell me what had been his own destination in early life. His father, who had been all his days a pedler, had acquired so much money as to afford his son a good, and even a learned education, intending him, of course, for the church. Through all the preparatory schools, Simon passed with credit to himself, and, at eighteen years of age, was sent to college. There, though the expense of the various classes was very great in comparison with the country schools, it could and would have been borne without murmur or surprise, because it was expected; but even Simon's father, accustomed to buy and sell, and calculate, had not calculated on such an expense as had actually and unavoidably accumulated before the close of the season, when all came to be summed up. But that was not all. Simon always saw with his eyes and heard with his ears, and every sense pressed conviction on his heart, that, except in very particular circumstances, the learned professions are not for a poor man's son. Where the bent to any particular profession is very strong, and the capacity for acquiring the preliminary branches indisputable, who shall venture to oppose the powerful dictates of nature? Yet, even in this rare case, what father and mother would not dread for their son the long apprenticeship of privation, and temptation, and penury, and mortification, and toil! But, in all ordinary cases, merely because a poor man has been blessed with a son of such good talents as, by the help of reading, writing, and arithmetic, as an outset, would fit him for an apprentice or clerk in any of the respectable trades or occupations of life, is not satisfied with *that*, but becomes immediately possessed with the vain desire of making him a minister, he shows in the very wish that he is utterly ignorant of the course to be pursued, every step of which would prove to him a step towards misery and ruin. "It is a possession!" cried Simon, driving his spade deeper in the clod, and let-

ting it stand there for a time, "I say it is nothing but a possession. It is the delusion of the enemy in the semblance of an angel of light to wile poor mortals to misery and ruin! What I have seen, in that one session at college, of human wretchedness! I might add, of vice, but that is best untold; poverty is ill enough without it! How many wretched lads did I there see! At first I shunned them, because I dreaded, as symbols of abomination, their filthy, unwashed, inky hands; their stained, torn, thread-bare college-gowns, covered with dirt and dust; their battered, rusty hats, their muddy shoes, their uncombed hair, matted and ragged like a muirland tup. All these filths filled me with shame, and turned my very stomach; for my own mother had brought me up in close intimacy with soap and water, in which, from my very infancy, I was plunged at least twice every day; for she often told me that dirt, indecency, and vice, were three cousins-german.

"Could I have wondered if the professors, or the young gentlemen about the college, had dreaded the contact of such fellows, when even I, one of their own rank, grued at them and blushed for them? Among these future doctors and ministers, however, I soon began to distinguish between those who wore the symbols of honest poverty alone, untainted with reckless vulgarity and dirt. Our pursuits and rank being the same, with many of these I became acquainted; and that was the time when I learned what is suffered by lads, even of the highest talents, and unpolluted with a single vice, when thrust, by their own misguided ambition, or the deluding fondness and vanity of their parents, into situations of expense which their humble means are utterly unable to support. There it was I first knew some who had nearly finished their studies and their lives: — the body worn to a shadow, — the kind, noble heart sunk into despondency by want and wo, — and the bright intellect strained to the verge of insanity by over-exertions, surrounded by poverty, and anxiety, and starvation!" Simon's voice trembled with emotion as he spoke. He stood a minute silent, and then resumed his spade, with a cloud on his brow, very unlike the usual sun-bright expression which characterized his face. It was long before he spoke again, and when he did, he abruptly began the same subject, which, it appeared, he had mentally pursued. "That was my first and last season at college. I laboured hard — made all the improvement I could; and, when the session was over, bade it, and every thought of being made a gentleman, farewell. I gratefully thanked my good father for what he had already done for me; but, by an account of what I had seen among my fellow-students, effectually cured him of the wish to make his son a minister.

"If every honest man were as easily persuaded, how much it would be for the happiness of himself and his family and the country at large. The Christian religion, — blessed be its Author! is designed for the poor as well as the rich; and it would not be easy to tell whether the rich or poor have most need of it to guide and support them through the cares and temptations belonging to each rank; but because the poorest have all the privileges of Christians as well as the richest, does that infer that they should become its teachers? Some indeed, are, from their childhood, stamped as it were by a superior turn of mind and talents, which shine out even in their persons and manners. Such will adorn any profession, but we do n't often see them, and it is not of those I speak. But what kind of ministers of the gospel can they make, who, with only ordinary talents, have been thumpit through the more needful drudge-work of the indispensable classes at school and college, so as to entitle them to a license to preach, and who look to the ministry for sorrow ha'et else than the road to the manse, the glebe, and the stipend! To obtain this, they will cringe to rich and to poor, flattering the evil passions of both. How it has gnawed my soul to see a man of this sort, utterly destitute of a gentleman's manners, or feelings, or accomplishments, merely because he had learned Greek and Latin, trans-

planted into a gentleman's house to have the up-bringing of his sons, though ignorant of the literature and of the very language of polished life. And, alas! how they are likely to be brought up — how they are, in fact, brought up, by one who, to keep himself in his place, having no better means — must cringe and flatter and indulge his pupils — gratify their propensities and humours — connive at their tricks, and conceal their delinquencies! They know little of human life who do not know that it is from *such* education as *such* men can give that so many of our young gentry, and even nobles, grow up idle, headstrong, and disobedient — often the dissipated or profligate slaves of their own wayward passions. Neglecting every religious duty — scorning its ministers, and hating Greek and Latin, because religion and its ministers, and their studies, are all indissolubly associated in their minds with their first preceptor, who, whatever his mode of teaching may have been, has never remembered the first, the last, the sole purpose of all teaching and all learning; that of striving to the uttermost of his power to make his pupils good and useful and pious men, men devoted to the performance of duty, and willing to live or die for their country or their God, as God may see fit to require.

“And on the other hand, my dear fellow, will you try to figure to yourself the situation of an accomplished, cultivated, thoroughly-taught youth, who, whatever may have been his original rank, has all the mind and feelings of a true gentleman, when the necessity of his circumstances compel him to accept, and *gratefully* to accept, the first offer he may receive of a place as tutor, although it be among those who have not one feeling in common with him, nor one feeling towards him but that he is a dependant in their pay. His very labours in the most important work which can be trusted to a human being, that of training young immortal creatures for earth and for heaven, sink him, in the estimation of the ignorant or vulgar rich or great, to the rank of an inferior. In the drawing-room he is never expected to appear; — and at the dinner table he is expected to sit as a mute. Whatever the conversation may be, though he could enlighten and enliven and delight by joining in the discussions, the sound of his voice would startle the company as much as if one of the candlesticks had spoken. It is very clear that in *such* cases the best tutor's best efforts may not succeed in bringing up his pupils to be either learned or virtuous, when father and mother in any way withhold their support to the means he may find needful to employ, or in any way sanction disobedience or faults which he has occasion to reprove. If they show him neglect, or slight his opinion, or scorn his judgment, or sneer at him in his absence, his usefulness is at an end. And it is deplorable to think of the insane cruelty of many parents, especially mothers, on this most momentous subject; and Heaven pity any conscientious young man so situated!

“No doubt, there have been some young men transplanted into happier and fairer scenes than these — among the good, the great, and the wise, who have not only welcomed them as equals, but as instructors; and when all the best powers and energies of their hearts and intellects have been called into action — but oh, boy, boy! these are rare occurrences, and few, few there be in humble rank, of the many who are educated for the church, who can look back on such an oasis in the dreary wilderness of their probationary life; — therefore let me advise you not to look forward to it, but leave the ministry to those who are already by God's will in that rank of life which best fits them for it. Do you, my dear young friend, fix your heart and mind on an humbler but surer sphere of usefulness, in that rank where your mother has shown you what one pair of little hands, never idle, may accomplish. How constantly and energetically she has exerted herself for the most worthy and beneficial purposes, and how much good she has done! Even her unobtruded example has in many ways improved the

neighbourhood. Take her for your example : — Let your aspirations be to rise in and to adorn that sphere in which her worth has hitherto enabled you, with God's blessing, to live and thrive. Here we have peace and plenty, and many humble but rational enjoyments; and the means of acquiring knowledge to fit us, in our turn, to instruct those whom, in the course of providence, it may become our duty to teach. Let us employ our one talent well to the best of our power; and rely upon it we shall in no wise lose our reward either here or hereafter. In doing this, rest assured the ministry will not suffer. Better far would it be were it left, more exclusively, in the hands of those whose natural rank and education fits, without such mortal toils and sufferings, for the fulfilment of its duties.

Simon then ceased for a while to speak, ending, as he generally did, with a few emphatic words, to which his bright expressive countenance and powerful voice gave such force and meaning, that I have sometimes found myself repeating them over and over for days after.

No man was ever better entitled to direct and advise; for in all things he practised his own lessons, and exacted far more of himself than of others. If ever it might be said of any mere man, I might dare to say of him, that he went about continually doing good; — and at the end of a well-spent day, devoutly implored forgiveness of his Saviour and his God, because he had done so little. I loved him and revered him from my infancy as a father, and of late had begun to repeat that honoured title more tenderly in my heart, for it was mingled there with another, and that other was the name of Simon's daughter. I loved, I suppose, as other boys love; though, of course, I thought no boy or man had ever loved like me. Simon, probably, was aware of my feelings before I knew them myself; and soon spoke to me with all the frankness of his upright guileless heart. He threw no obstacles to torment, or provoke me to fly in the face of reason and duty: but he calmly explained the enormity of people marrying before having the means of providing for a family — a crime which he illustrated by many a woful example; and after pointing out, and placing me on the road through which I might, by my own efforts, obtain these means, we went on peacefully, like father and son, as before. He gave me the management, first of a part, and then of all his farm, during his summer journeys, and also encouraged me to take a small portion of it into my own hands, for which I paid him rent, like Jacob. I served him seven years, and they seemed to me but as seven days. I was not, like Jacob, cheated at the end of them; for these labours had their effect, and enabled me to acquire a legal title to call Simon father. That I have been happy beyond the common lot, will be easily believed, when I say, that Simon's daughter is worthy of her parentage.

Years have rolled on; how rapidly they roll, and with ever-increasing speed! Still they have found me a blest and happy man, in spite of an ordinary portion of the troubles and sorrows of this scene of trial.

During one of those years, circumstances occurred which made it needful for me to accompany Simon in his annual round of the summer fairs. All things having been prepared, on a sweet May morning we set off. Simon and I, as escort to his pony and covered cart, in which he conveyed his articles of merchandise, amongst which, and other annual contributions, was my mother's annual web of towelling, made of yarn, spun by herself from lint of her own growing. And, in spite of the perfection and cheapness to which the improvements of machinery have brought all species of goods, this still found a ready market among a certain class of substantial judicious housewives, who prefer laying out twenty shillings for what will last twenty or thirty years, to giving ten shillings for what will be worn out in five. I was very doleful for some miles; but wherever we went, Simon, acquainted with every turn, every house and tree, every place and person, had something to tell of all. In his company it was impossible

to continue dull or uninterested in what was passing around you. He was welcomed wherever he appeared. It seemed as if the kindness of his own heart made every other heart kind to him; and during this summer's excursion I often thought that he lived more in the same space of time than any other person. He never was dozed or indifferent. He was alive to every event and every one's interests. He knew every one's children by name; knew every one's subjects of joy and sorrow; and was ever ready with heart and hand to help and console and advise in the most effectual manner.

On this grand event of our married life, this our first parting, in the sadness of our hearts, I gave my sweet wife my promise to write down the events of every day, that on my return she might live along with me this to her a lost portion of existence. This promise I faithfully kept. The events, indeed, were few; but the anecdotes which the depot in Simon's memory furnished, and which the interest he took in all he saw called forth from others, were unnumbered, and might fill many goodly volumes. Whether I am right in thinking that a few of them will interest other people as they interested me, I cannot guess. We are most inadequate judges of the *real* importance of what is said, or done, or suffered by ourselves, or those we love; or the power of what has passed under our own eyes, or into our own ears, to excite interest in those who have no local attachments, and no *small* personal importance or vanity to bias their feelings. Little events that are near are so much greater than great ones afar off! An ugly little gray moth on my window at this instant hides from my eye the rising moon, and a feudal castle, with some miles of sea and land around it.

THE DEATH-BED.

"SIMON told me he meant to pay a visit to an old and intimate friend in the neighbourhood of this place, whom he never failed to see as he passed, and at whose house I would be heartily welcomed as his companion. "It is only about four miles from this," said he; "we'll leave the pony here, and walk out in the afternoon."

It was a most lovely evening when we set off; summer was in all its glory; and he must have a cold or a wicked heart, who can gaze unmoved on all the varied charms which nature, in this delightful season, scatters around us. Whether we look abroad on the wide face of the country, and mark it clad in the glowing mantle of a coming harvest—that promise of comfort and abundance to thousands and thousands of dependent beings—or observe the minuter beauties lavished on every turf we tread beneath our feet, we have equal cause to adore the Father who so careth for us, and whose care we, alas! requite with such thoughtless ingratitude! Such were my reflections as we wound along the beautiful road that leads from L—— towards the village of D——. I could have long indulged them in silence, but Simon was no admirer of silence. "The man," said he, "whom we are going to visit, is one of the most marked instances I have ever known of what can be effected by patient, prudent industry, and good management. He set out in life without a single sixpence, and he is now a wealthy farmer with houses and lands of his own; able to set his family most respectably into the world; and that, I am very certain, without having ever wronged any one of a penny. When quite a child, he was left an orphan, and the only guide and guardian he had was his grandmother, who maintained herself and him by spinning. William herded, as most country children do, for the neighbouring farmers, and did any other little jobs that offered through the summer, and with his small earnings was able

to go during the winter to the parish school. I have often heard him tell, that when he used to say to his grandmother, 'Oh, grannie, what 'll become o' me when I'm big, and have naebody to help me forward, or speak a gude word for me?' 'Haud your tongue, bairn,' she would say, 'turn up the buke there that's lyin' on your knee, and see wha it is that ca's Himsel' *The Father of the fatherless, and the orphan's stay*. Tak ye gude care to do your ain part faithfully, as far as in ye lies, and be ye vera sure He will not forget His promises. — Blessed be His name.'

"But, grannie, what's 'my part'; what can sic a wee body as me do?" 'My bairn, your part is to be as gude as ye can; to labour at your buke, to improve your sma' opportunities as muckle as possible. That buke tells ye of a Saviour who will guide all who trust in him. Be true, honest, and faithfu'; not only a reader but a doer of His word; for if we disobey His commandments, and follow after sin, we canna reasonably expect to partake in His promised mercy either here or hereafter. Be an honest man, as your father was afore ye; and aye mind this, "I have been young, and now am old, and never yet did I see the righteous forsaken, or his children begging their bread."

"It was thus that with 'godly simplicity' the poor old woman rooted in the heart of her orphan boy those feelings of strict honesty and pious dependence on Providence for which he is so remarkable." "But," said I, "there must have been something uncommon or strange in his lot that has enabled him to rise from such extreme poverty to wealth and consequence."

"Nothing either strange or uncommon," rejoined Simon, "any more than that he who sowed the field before us should reap the harvest. William reaped the happy fruits of a good and early established character. A wealthy farmer, for whom he had herded for two or three summers, thinking him a quiet industrious boy, took him as an under ploughman; and with this farmer he remained twelve years, having in that time risen to be his principal servant, and greatly esteemed and trusted by his master. About this time a small farm in the neighbourhood fell out of lease; his master encouraged him to take it and begin for himself, and was so thoroughly convinced of William's honesty, that he even offered to be cautioner for his rent. William thanked him very gratefully, and, after consulting his grandmother, who was now bed-ridden, he took the farm; and though the laird was a stranger to him, even here his good character availed him; the gentleman had made strict inquiry about him, and, after the bargain was concluded, showed him a letter from a man in the same parish, offering 5*l.* more rent than William was to give. 'But,' says he, 'I understand his character is not so good as yours, and I considered 5*l.* per annum well spent in buying an honest tenant. With what he had saved every year out of his wages, he was able to stock the little farm pretty well; but the first year or two he was sorely anxious, and toiled late and early to ensure success. Soon after his good auld grannie went to her rest, he took a wife, and he was most fortunate in his choice. His old master's only daughter had aye looked very kindly on him: she was very pretty, and would have better than a hundred pounds of portion; but she was neither clever nor managing. I well mind his saying to me, 'There's nae doubt a hundred pound is a heap o' siller, and to tell the real truth, it wad be vera convenient to me the noo, — besides that she's a bonny loesome lassie, — but, Simon, the thing that aye comes in my head is this, when I've gotten the hundred pound, there's an end o' t; for Jeanie is nae manager, she's a bit handless thing: and it's no to be told how a man's fortune, as weel as his comfort, depend upon his wife; she can either haud in or put out his siller without his being able to tell how; another thing, if we had bairns, I wud like to see them weel brought up, and I think she's no fit at a' for that. That's a job needs baith head and hands!'"

"I commended his good sense, and agreed most heartily to what he said. The next time I came round this way I found him married, and it only needed a look at the neat well-ordered house, and the comfortable cleanly dinner to which we sat down, to be convinced he had gotten a wife with baith 'head and hands,' though that was her only portion. They've had a large family, and have four sons and two daughters still alive; I understand they are all dutiful, well-doing children, and when you see them, I'm sure ye'll say ye never saw a handsomer family, — but here's the honest man's house, and wae's me, I think every thing looks queer and silent about the door."

Every thing did indeed wear a sad and silent aspect as we drew near the house of William Shearman. The horses were wandering about idle, and the unyoked cart lay at the house-door, from which, as we approached, no one appeared, no sound of household work or merry song was heard. Just as Simon's hand was on the latch, he paused, for we now distinctly heard the slow and measured voice of one in prayer, — "Wae's me," said Simon in a whisper, "the hand of sorrow is here, — that's the voice of their minister, — we must wait till the prayer is done, — some one is ill, — Oh, which can it be?" — and as he spoke his honest countenance bore witness to the grief he felt. The prayer continued but a very few minutes; and mingled with it were reached our ears the stifled sobs of grief, and, now and then, the groans as of one in pain. The moment it ceased, Simon went in, and dismal was the scene that met our eyes. The father was stretched upon a bed, surrounded by his sorrowing family, and never can I forget the expression of meek resignation, mingled with that of bodily anguish, which appeared on the countenance of the dying man — for dying he evidently was — and the various attitudes of affection and of woe in which his wife and children hung round him. His youngest daughter, a lovely girl about sixteen, sat in the bed behind him, giving, or supposing that she gave, the support which was more efficiently afforded by Matthew, his eldest son, the perfect stillness and stern composure of whose pale face formed a strong contrast with the child-like vehemence of his sister's grief. The mother sat upon the bed, with the hand of her faithful partner clasped in both of hers; but no tears flowed from her eyes, and her whole countenance had the bewildered look of one in a dream, who does not comprehend what is passing. Short and almost silent, though evidently sincere, was the welcome given to Simon; but in a moment they were all once more absorbed in attention to their father. "Oh, Allan," said Simon to a young man, "what is the matter? — what has befallen your father-in-law?" "A fall," said the young man; "coming from the field, standing in his cart, the horse started, and he was thrown out backwards on a heap of stones, — the doctor says the collar-bone is broken, and sair injury done about the neck." Before Simon could reply to this whispered communication, Matthew beckoned him to approach the bed; he did so, and as the son named him to his father, a bright gleam of intelligence passed over the old man's face; he made a violent effort to speak, but sinking nature could no longer be commanded; he turned his eyes on Simon with a look that seemed to ask for commiseration, and sunk back, exhausted, on the breast of his son. In a few minutes a slight convulsion moved the bed-clothes — then all was still — I saw it again, and Matthew bent forward as if to screen his father's face from the view of his poor mother, whose attention seemed suddenly roused by feeling the hand she grasped convulsed within her own. Matthew soon raised himself up, and as he did so, he closed the eyes of his parent. The mother started from the bed with a frantic gesture — "What is it, what is it, Matthew — I charge ye tell me, what is it?" Matthew gently laid down the poor mortal remains; and as he turned to his mother, and attempted to take her in his arms, he uttered in a deep sepulchral tone — "Mother, dear mother, be

composed — the spirit has returned to Him who gave it!" She turned with a dreadful cry; and as the sight of the already much altered face confirmed the dreadful truth, she threw herself on the bed, and gave way to every expression of the wildest grief — "William! O William, William, William," she repeated over and over, as if she sought relief in uttering that name, which was now but an empty sound. "It canna be, it canna be, that I am left my lane in this cauld world, William, William, it canna be." Her children crowded round her, their own distress aggravated by the sight of her violence. Matthew tried to raise her from the bed, but she clung to the corpse. — "My dear mother, be composed. Is it not the hand of the Lord? against it wad ye rebel?" He paused, and then added in a deeper tone, "*Mother, you are disturbing the departing spirit.*"

These words were the first she seemed to hear, and addressed as they were to a belief (to call it a *superstition* sounds harshly in my ear) so prevalent in Scotland, they produced an immediate effect. The clenched hands dropped from their hold, and she allowed her son to carry her from the chamber of death. As he raised her, I observed her face was flushed, and her eye glazed and tearless.

They were followed by the two weeping daughters, and by Simon, who waited at the house-door for Matthew's return from the room to which he had carried his mother. "Matthew," said he, as they shook hands affectionately, "there is something not natural in your mother's situation." "Oh, Mr. Simon, can any body wonder at the violence o' her grief — this day nine-and-twenty years —" his voice choked, and Simon went on. "I have known her long, Matthew, I know her piety and resignation under suffering. I saw her lose the father to whom she was so fond and dutiful a daughter, and I saw her lose her first child, your elder brother; and while she bent like a lily over them in speechless sorrow, every look and motion said, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' Now, she has shed no tear, her cheek and her hand are burning; depend upon it she is taking a fever; be ruled by me, and send for the doctor." "I dinna think that, I'm sure I hope it's no sae," replied Matthew; "but indeed she has na been like hersel'. That night it happened she had wandered out, as was her custom, to meet him coming frae his wark, so it came on her like a thunder-clap; she never spoke, never shed a tear, and seemed as if she grew quite stiff — her face has been like paper ever since, till now, as ye say, I did notice it flushed." "Well, Matthew, be persuaded, and let me send for the doctor." "Vera weel, Mr. Simon, be it sae; but oh, sirs," he added, with a bitter groan, as he turned away, "what can an earthly doctor do for the rending heart!" I offered my services to go on this errand, and in a few minutes I was mounted on one of their horses, pursuing my way back to the town we had so lately left.

The peaceful moon, that smiles alike on the joys and sorrows of poor toilsome man, was shedding its lovely light on every object as the doctor and I once more drew near the house of mourning. "What a joyous, happy family was this but three short days ago," said he, as we dismounted, "and what an awful change!"

We found that Simon's apprehensions had been too correct. The doctor bled the nearly insensible mother, and I heard him say that a few hours more might have rendered his services unavailing. "If tears would now come to her relief," added he, "all might soon be well." Simon had intimated to me that we should return to L—— that night, in case of putting the family to inconvenience, and we accordingly prepared to depart along with the doctor; but this intention was earnestly opposed by Matthew and his brothers. "You have assisted me, Simon, this night, in scaling up my father's desk, and I canna tak it kind if ye dinna stay to undo thae seals, and hear what's to come o' us a' hereafter." He stopped, for his manly

heart was too full ; Simon's eye, too, glistened as he shook him by the hand, and assured him he had no intention but that of returning in the morning to stay till he attended the remains of his early friend to their narrow bed. Here the doctor touched Matthew's shoulder, and told him to go to his mother, and say that Simon was going away, and wished to say good night to her. Matthew hesitated, as if afraid to distress her, but went, and we heard him repeat the message. She seemed to start half up, and exclaimed, in a feeble, bewildered voice—"Simon, Simon Fraser, it's dark night now, he manna gang. Surely your father winna let him gang ; tell your father to—" No sooner had the words passed her lips than they were followed by a burst of uncontrollable agony, that seemed absolutely rending the soul of the desolated mourner. However, we had the melancholy satisfaction of hearing it soon subside into sobs and tears. Simon went into the room, and remained a few minutes with her. We then bade an affectionate good-night to the family, and proceeded slowly back to L—, with hearts and feelings deeply solemnized by the scenes we had so unexpectedly witnessed.

The few and simple events of the time intervening between this and the day of the funeral, afforded little worth recording ; the struggle between the natural feelings of overwhelming grief and suggestions of habitual piety, were most interesting to witness, but are not subjects for description.

There was something inexpressibly affecting in the now noiseless wo of the widowed mother, and the assiduous affection with which each of her children strove to comfort and sooth her.—"What a blessed education these young people must have had," said I to Simon on the day of the funeral, as we stood alone at the door ; "they are really a family of love." "Yes," said Simon, "they had the best. They never heard a brawling word pass between their father and mother, and besides that, I often observed there was nothing William and she checked with more severity, when they were bairns, than any inclination to quarrel—the boys were taught to be kind and helpful to their sisters ; and if at any time a dispute did arise between the boys, instead of quieting them by force, with a gowl and a thump on both their backs, as I have o'er often seen in other houses, William would look into what they were bickering about, and do justice between them ; and as he never spared the offender, this made the boys less mischievous and heedless of what they did to one another, than if they had known that he would never take heed to what they did. But the grand secret of their good education was the perfect obedience their parents exacted. None of them can remember a time when they durst even have gone out or in at a door if father or mother said "na." Many people are so foolish as to think that there's no use in commanding or controlling the will of a wee bairnie, or punishing it when disobedient ; but they may take the word of an old man, that if their children are disobedient at three years old, they will become more and more so every future year they live ; and if children *get* their own will in trifles, they will *take* it in more important matters."

Here we were interrupted by the arrival of the neighbours who came to attend the funeral.

The perfect decency and solemnity with which every thing was conducted was highly pleasing to my feelings, for I could remember a time when country funerals in Scotland were, shame to say so, apt to wear a different aspect. When the sad and sternly simple ceremony by which, in this country, "dust to dust" is joined, was over, Matthew invited the aged clergyman to come in the evening, and be present at the reading of his father's will. When we returned home, accompanied by a maternal uncle of the young men, we found a plain well-prepared dinner spread for our reception : the widow and her daughters came and sat down, each one trying

to restrain the tears that were swelling in their eyes. When we sat down to this first regular meal since the death of the father, the voice that was wont duly to ask a blessing on their humble fare was hushed for ever, and all seemed struck anew with the magnitude of their loss. It was strange — but among all the afflicting scenes through which I saw him pass, none seemed so far to overcome Matthew's unbending fortitude as this. His eye glanced twice towards his mother, then with a violent effort he took his father's empty seat, raised his hands, which shook as if palsied, and uttered a few words, inaudible from excessive emotion.

From respect to Simon, I was asked to be present at the reading of the will. Simon and the clergyman broke the seals, and along with Matthew sought every part of the desk in vain for any indication of such a paper. "Is there nae ither place we can seek," said the uncle, "did he keep papers nae whar else i' the house?" "No," replied Matthew, "he had nae ither place to my knowledge that he ever put papers into, and farther search is needless; Indeed I was a' but certain that nae will was ever made, but I thought it right to look."

There was perfect silence for a moment — it was broken by the uncle, who bluntly addressed his nephew, "Aweel, Matthew, my man, ye're master o' a', then — I wuss ye health wi' a' your wealth — it's a pity o' your brithers, puir chields! but nae doot ye'll no' see them want a' thegither." A strong expression of displeasure passed across Matthew's brow at this speech, but no one spoke. I saw Simon and the old clergyman watch him with intense anxiety. He looked round on his brothers and sisters, and then, in his own quiet tone of voice, he said, "I'm sure we a' ken that our dear father that's gane loved a' his bairns alike, and whatever is amang us o' warld's gear was gained by his industry and prudence, therefore it is but fair that a' should share it alike. This is what I think he intended if it had pleased the Lord to spare him to make his ain will. I wuss to God I daur hope to be ay able to fill his place as easily. Let the farm and lyin' money be equally divided amang us four brithers, and then each gie a portion to Lizzy and Mary — the only privilege I ax aboon the lave is to keep my mother" — he stopped, and I need not describe what followed. The brothers showed themselves no less generous, by reminding him that he had been assisting their father with the farm long before they were able to work; which, exclusive of birth, gave him a title to more than the rest. The uncle said, "It was an unco thing to act sae cuttily; he suld hae ta'en advice aff some sensible wise like freend afore he did the like o' that; nae doot he's doin' t' for the best, but it's a horrid pity to be riving and dividing at sic a grand farm. Folk suld na be in a hurry wi' the like o' that, but that was just the gate o' his father afore him." "Yes," interrupted Simon, to whom this was addressed, "Matthew is worthy to be the son of William Shearman, and that is as muckle as I can say in his praise, for I think in my heart a better man or Christian never drew breath." It was finally agreed that Simon and the clergyman should act as executors to see the property divided, debts paid, &c. Before the good old minister departed, he addressed the family with admirable sense and feeling. I wish I could give what he said in his own words, particularly the simple yet emphatic orones in which he recommended the example of their father to the pious imitation of his sons, and bid them beware of putting his memory to shame in this world, and forfeiting their hope of rejoining him in that eternity of bliss to which it had pleased God to receive him. After pronouncing a very short but beautiful prayer, the venerable man departed; and when I observed the dignified affection that marked his whole demeanour while in the house, I could not but muse upon the truly inestimable blessings bestowed on a country — the virtues, and consequently the prosperity pro-

duced and fostered by a *resident clergy*. Blessings nothing else can produce, and the want of which nothing else can compensate.

"*Wo, and again I say wo*" unto him who lightly undertakes, or unfaithfully fulfils the awful duty of being thus, as it were, God's delegate on earth!

WORLDLY WISDOM, AND ITS END.

WE left the house of mourning and its excellent inmates, with feelings rather solemnized than sad, and pursued our up-hill road towards the town where Simon had business to transact. After walking some miles in silence, I turned to admire the surpassing beauty of the views all around; and Simon sat thoughtfully down on the grass. It was not often that he was so long silent. At last, pointing to a cluster of cottages under a clump of fine old trees a short way off—he looked mournfully in my face, saying—"That tenantless clay once sheltered a blithe and thriving family—and now, in yon far off field, in an unhallowed grave, lie the bones o' him that was its master. I went by—and he was not—I sought him—but his place could not be found!" I looked at the good man, and saw a tear trembling in his eye, but did not speak.

"Aye, silence, silence is best over such a grave!" he continued with a heavy sigh. "Many a time have I trudged this hill road; and many a merry evening I've passed up yonder beside the fire that's quenched for ever. James Barr, the tenant of this farm, was a jovial, thorough-gaun chield, active and laborious—up early and late—driving forward his work, and keeping his farm and all about it in the highest possible order. His wife was a clever and most worthy woman, who, in her department, fulfilled every duty well and wisely. I never met with them but at the time of my periodical visits, when I was sure to receive a most hearty welcome, and stayed sometimes an hour or two, sometimes a night, and all seemed well. The wife was of a sober and rather a grave cast, and James, though restless and rattle-brained, and apt to let his tongue run on at random, was yet, when we sat down to chat, a rational, clear-headed fellow, with fewer prejudices than common farmers *then* generally had, of which his fields bore sufficient evidence; for he had adopted many new improvements. I therefore found my occasional visits to him very agreeable, and thought time would ere long mend his faults.

"I, however, did not like the manner in which I heard him spoken of by his neighbours, even those who I did not think had any cause to dislike him. Some laughed and shook their heads, calling him a queer man, giving many a hint that, if he did not grow rich, it would not be because he stickled at the means. 'Only let Jemmy get sight o' the thing he's wantin', and, my word! he'll make a steeple race for't. It will be a gay big bar in his gaet that he'll no lowp owre.' 'And then,' another would add, 'he's gotten in wi' the laird. Ye see, he takes the laird's bidden about drainin' and dykin' and limin' and dungen'; and, ye see, that pleases the gentles, but what ken they about lan' and craps? but just, ye see, they like puir folk to do their biddin', and that's what Jemmy does. And if ye but heard him wi' the laird, how *impudent* he is f' and the laird laughs, and thinks him sic a clever chield, and, my word, he is that! and that the laird'll fin', yet, owre the finger nebs, or I'm mista'en."

"The hint of his being in favour with the laird seemed to explain away much of what I heard: and though some things *did* stick in my mind, and though all seemed going on as hitherto in his house, every year seemed to add a graver and graver cast to the disposition of his wife, and to furnish

his neighbours with new subjects of suspicion. In the course of my usual journeyings, in the common room of an inn, far from this, on the night of a fair, I sat with a number of farmers, and dealers of various descriptions, who were enjoying themselves round a good fire, and over their ale and whiskey punch; telling many a strange tale of cheats, pranks, and supple tricks they had witnessed in the course of the day, when an old man, seizing a pause in the conversation, began, 'Ay, but what d'ye think o' that devil's limb, Jemmy Barr? there was he and a bit wee twal year auld cow to sell. So, what had he done, but twa three weeks syne he closes her up in the byre, and to wark he fa's on puir aul' Crumie, and he feeds her wi' the stuff they gie to game cocks, *deil fa' me* gin I dinna believe it was stown frae the laird, — I kenna what they ca't; but he and the bit callan Jemmy curried and scoured and buttered and brushed her aul' hide, till they garred her shine like a race-horse. Neist he fa's foul o' her aul' rough horns, that I'll swear had a dizen o' nicks in them; and he and the bit callan — sorrow fa' him to learn his ain bairn sic tricks — and they pared and they scrapit wi' this thing and the tither thing that wrights polish their wark wi', till they made them like ony three year aul' quey's.' Some laughed, some looked grave, but the speaker went on. 'But, what do ye think o' the graceless dog gieing such a lesson to his ain laddie? And that's no the warst o't. — Aft comes he to the fair wi' his dainty young cow: But he's owre weel kenned now-a-days to come muikle speed at a fair: so he gies Jemmy Crumie's tether, and set him into the fair by himself, weel instructed how he was to proceed. The father and son took nae notice o' ither whan they met, but they had their ain signals for a' that, and about the height o' the fair the callan gets amang a wheen stranger folk. So they took notice o' him, for he's a bit bonny callan, and they spe'ert about his cow, and I'se warrant you she was his 'granny's cow, and she had to be sell't to pay the rent, and, tho' he's as sharp as a needle, he lookit like a simpleton. So by comes the father, by *chance*, ye're sure, and he began jawing him about the cow, spe'ert gin it was a year aul', and gin he would gie't for twa notes. So the folk took the callan's part, and the twa played to ane anither's han's, till, deevil be on me, gin they did na manage atween them to sell the puir auld worn-out b——, that'll die in the calving, for a five year auld, o' the Guernsey bluid, and got fifteen guineas for her!'

"The expressions, called forth by this recital were various, as usual, among such people, many of them hardened in sin; but, though some laughed loud at the successful knavery, all, with one feeling, reprobated with execration the conduct of the godless father. As for me, I was mute in grief and astonishment, and for many years travelled little by the hill road, and saw little of James Barr. I could now account for the melancholy of his excellent wife, and for her sake, occasionally stopped at the house for an hour. Every thing seemed thriving, the farm, the cattle, the houses, all appeared in the highest order. His eldest son, this very Jemmy mentioned by the old farmer, had grown a fine, tall, handsome fellow, and had married well. The wife alone looked sad, and low in spirits, and broken in health. The last time I saw her, when I was about to take leave, she said to me, 'So, Simon, and you *must* go! Farewell, Simon, it's no likely we'll ever meet here again, for I'm wearing awa, and the Lord's will be done! I have tried to do my duty to the best of my knowledge, but I have been a poor unprofitable servant. It has no pleased the Lord to gie me power over the evil spirits I've had to encounter.' I fixed my eyes on the poor woman's face, fearing her brain was touched with some fanatical fancies, but she went on. 'James cares for none of these things. This world, and the things o' this world, are a' he looks to; the mammon of unrighteousness has blinded his heart. These barns and byres; these bits o' fields, his crops and his cattle; these are his gods! Oh, Simon! Simon!

I daur say he has never said in his heart, There is no God; but, weel I wat, he lives without God in this world, and seems never to remember that there is anither. When he comes as near to the entrance of that unseen world as I am, what will a' that he's gathering and fechtin' for here avail him! I have done my best, and strove my best to lead him to higher thoughts, but it has pleased God to give me nae power owre him; and, oh, Simon, Simon, that's heavy at my heart, but it's no a'. He has ruined my bairns. Young things are thoughtless enough at the best, and och, a mother has muckle ado, even wi' the best help o' her guidman, to teach them and lead them in the way o' their duty to their Maker and their neighbour, and far mair to gar them perform it. But oh, wae's me! I've had ony thing but help frae the father o' my unhappy weans. Gleg are they, and easily did they learn that he would find little fault tho' they should fling a' their puir mither's counsels at their heels! I have prayed, day and night have I prayed, when nae mortal e'e saw, nor mortal ear heard me; and like king David, when he prayed for pardon o' his ain sins, and the sins of his cruel and rebellious sons, I ha'e mony a weary night watered my couch wi' my tears. But it availed not, and now I can greet nae mair. My head's burning dry, and my heart's withered. I cannot last lang now, the Lord will soon tak me hame; and tho' it has been his holy will to deny me an answer to my prayers while livin', och, maybe, Simon, he may vouchsafe an answer in mercy when I'm dead; he may yet touch their cauld and stony hearts, and open their eyes before they sleep the sleep o' death. They say deeing folk see whyles muckle that's coming, and if the thoughts o' my heart, that's gaun like a hammer, dinna mislead me, there's baith wo and want afore them when I'm awa. Ill gotten gear winna last. A little that a just man hath is better than great riches o' the ungodly. And, O Lord! it may be that the unthankfu' hearts, that grew careless and hard in the day of prosperity, may melt and be purified in the furnace of affliction.'

"The poor woman's cheeks had rapidly assumed a vivid red, and her eyes sparkled intensely, as if with inspiration, as she spoke, not in the usual subdued mournful tones, but with the rapidity and force of delirium. She turned suddenly from me and went into the house; and I sought the field for some of her family. I found her son James, and told him I thought his mother alarmingly ill. He looked sincerely concerned, and instantly quitting his work, hurried into the house; I believe a doctor was sent for without loss of time, but the good woman died in the couse of the next day.

"I do not know how soon her dying words began to be fulfilled, for fulfilled they were, at least in part. I was disgusted to hear how little her husband regarded her death. I suppose he had felt her silent serious virtue and piety a severe restraint; and, as his neighbours said, 'gaed clean aff at the nail,' as soon as she was removed. But still he went on accumulating wealth by all sorts of means, and everything seemed to thrive with him, and round him; when, suddenly, he became dull and dispirited, and careless of all his former idols. He shut his eyes upon his fine horses, his prize cows, his beautiful fields, and rich crops; the neighbours said, he had got the blink o' an ill e'e, or that he had seen a bogle, and some that his wife's ghost haunted him. Others thought 'his conscience was waukened, and it might lead to guid, if he didna quench the workings o' the spirit; but, oh, sirs! James is unco like a man that *would do that*, ye see he has na gaen near the minister!'

"Meeting his son, he begged me to go in and see his father, who was 'sore changed, and sat continually by the fire moaning and sighing.' And when we ax what ails him, he only repeats in a voice that would break your heart, 'What ails me.' And we daur na leave him alane for a minute, since ae day I caught him hiding a piece rape wi' a rinnin' noose on't.

'Gude save us!' Amen, God save us! repeated I. Your father, and you, and all the rest of us, have much need to pray, Lord save us, else we perish. Lord, lead us not into temptation! You have all had a long period of prosperity and health. If you have not received and used these blessings well, see that you profit by adversity, should it now be at hand. You, James, are still a young man; and be warned to 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them,' as your wretched father now does; for you may rest assured, that whether you have prosperity or adversity, this life, with all its joys and sorrows, will soon, soon pass away like a tale that is told. Even should we arrive at old age, which very few of us do, and we are liable to death every moment; but, supposing we should attain to the extremest length of life, still death comes at last, and mark me, James, 'after death the judgment.' 'Ay, that's just like my puir mother, she was aye speaking that gate. O, it was beautifu' to hear her how she could speak, just like the minister or you, Simon!' 'It is little matter what we speak or hear unless we make a good use of it,' said I, 'unless, indeed, to bring us under a heavier condemnation. He who knows his duty, or who, from his opportunities, *might* know it, and who does not fulfil it, shall be beaten with many stripes. Your excellent mother's life was as good as her conversation was instructive and edifying. And if you don't make a good use of both her precepts and her example, it would be better for you at the last day if you had never been born. I say, James—far better would it be never to have known life at all, than by our own wilful sins and impenitence, to incur the risk of living to all eternity in torments prepared for the devil and his angels.' 'Thae's awfu' words, Simon!' said he. 'Yes, they are awful words,' I replied, 'but not the hundredth part so awful as the fact is terrible and true. They are awful *now*; they are of infinite importance *now*: how awful then will they be at the hour of death! tho', even then, their real importance cannot be increased; for it is only *now* that it will avail us. It is during every moment of our fleeting lives that it is of eternal importance to us to consider their awful meaning, not merely at the hour of death. What will it avail us *then* to remember the words of God spoken to us thro' the voice of our mother? what, but to aggravate the terrors and the horrors of death! After a life of sin, of utter disregard of our duties to God and to man, when we can do no more ill, when temptation is extinguished in the dregs of existence, when the surfeiting of sin fills us with loathing and remorse—should we *then* be happy to make a snatch at heaven rather than eat of the fruit of our doings in that place prepared for the evil spirits to whose guidance we abandoned ourselves as long as we could—what will it avail? will *that* wish entitle us to enter on a state of eternal enjoyment?' 'Thro' our Saviour,' said the young man. 'He pardoned the penitent thief on the cross.' 'He did,' I replied, 'the thief received his pardon at the hour of death; but what authority have we to suppose that his *repentance* was deferred till then? It is nowhere said at what time he had committed the crime for which he suffered. Detection and condemnation don't often follow instantly; it might have been years before: and probably, from the feelings he showed, it had been deeply repented of. And never forget, this was a case without a parallel on earth. The Lord and Giver of life was at the moment making atonement for the sins of the world, and, with his own divine lips, gave the assurance of pardon to a repentant human brother in the agonies of death, who had confessed his divinity at that dark and dreadful hour when his own apostles had forsaken him and fled. And, moreover, it is only God and our Saviour who can judge of the degree of guilt that accompanies *any crime*; so, do not let any frantic hopes arising from *this one case*, which, as I have said, can never have a parallel on earth—delude you to put off the hour of peni-

tence and amendment. If you read your Bible, it is impossible you can overlook the perpetually recurring testimony of both Old and New Testament, that, without holiness, no man can see God. And, James, holiness is not a thing to be put off and on at pleasure. It is no particular act of repentance, of piety, or of good works. It is the habitual temper. It is truth, honesty, and purity, influencing our whole conduct to our neighbour, and devout worship of our God, fitting the soul, after death, to join the pure and glorious spirits in heaven in their divine occupations.' The young man was very attentive while I spoke, and very grave. He thanked me for my good advices, — and, perfectly resolved to begin to repent next morning, he found, as multitudes before and since have found, the road to perdition made smooth and pleasant by a pavement of good resolutions.

"I went into the house with him, and then saw the father, a breathing monument of what poor frail man is when touched by the finger of God! He sat scowling around him, with mingled hatred and fear in his angry countenance, refusing to eat or speak. He was lean, and haggard, and old-looking for his years, and it was very difficult to believe him the same person I had formerly known, full of jokes and joviality; at work from morning till night, through foul and fair weather, heaping up uncertain riches, and now that he had got them, there he was, to show us that, without the blessing of God, our hope and our labour are all in vain. Surrounded with comforts and blessings, he knew no comfort, and felt no blessing! He had, no doubt, through life, attended church regularly. He had paid God external worship, had honoured Him with his lips when his heart was far from him, but it may be truly said, he had never devoutly and piously prayed God to bless him, or his work; and God left him to himself! He looked at me as I entered, and a consciousness that I knew him and his doings seemed to cross his mind with a strong feeling of shame. His pale face reddened for a moment, and then became paler than before. He rose from his seat, and gave me his hand as cold and damp as clay. 'Neighbour,' said I, 'I am sorry to see you thus.' 'Ay, I ha' na' been weel,' he replied; and the croak of his hollow sepulchral voice made me chill, and brought to my mind strange thoughts of the doleful creatures, we are told, were to howl over Babylon. 'Ay, I ha' na' been weel,' he repeated, 'and I canna just say either what ails me.' 'You are needing exercise, for one thing,' said I; 'you are grown quite cauld and stockit wi' sitting there dozing at the fire. Go out to your work, man, and do your duty.' 'My duty!' he uttered after me with a shudder. 'Ay, your duty,' I also repeated; 'do you think our duties cease though we cease to perform them?' 'Maybe no,' came forth from his breast, nearly inarticulate in the groan which accompanied it: 'but ye see I'm no like mysel', Simon: I care na for my wark, no! no! I canna bide to see my wark, it's a' ahin'; every thing's gane wrang. The grund's cald, wat, and dirty. There's nae light nor heat in the sun now; the world's grown dark and ugly; the very bits o' birds that used to sing sae merry and sweet when the world was bonny — their din deaves me now; they do naething but screech in my lug like a wheen jay-piets. I hate the world, and I wish I were out o' t': there's naething like what it wont to be. I gaed into the barn — to do a thing' — his son's eyes and mine met — 'to do a thing — I kent nae were near me, and that I would get peace to do 't. But, just then, just at the moment, such an awfu' sound pierced my ears! — the dreadful thought entered my mind that it was the last trumpet; I fell throu' my purpose, and I staitered down to the floor, and there I stood still trembling; cald draps fell frae my brow and chin, and the noise o' a hundred mills was in my brains. At last I cam a wee to mysel' again, and what was a' this about, think ye? Heard ever ony body the like? What was't but the crawling o' the cock on a bank, at my lug! heard ony one e'er the like o' t', that I should be see

bewitched as to staun there shiverin' and gaspin,' as if I was in the dead thraws, because the cock craw'd !' 'The crowing of a cock has awakened the conscience of a sinner, before now,' said I, solemnly. 'If you were conscious of any crime, either perpetrated or intended, I hope, like Peter, you went out and wept bitterly?' His face changed colour, but he went on, as if he had not heard me, to repeat, 'I hate this ugly warld, I wish I were weel out o't.' 'Speak no ill of this world,' said I, 'it's far too good for those who are in it, neighbour; and see that ye be fit to leave it, and fit to appear before your Maker in judgment, before ye impiously revile it, and wish to leave it. Remember, there is neither knowledge, nor device, nor repentance in the grave, to which we are all hurrying fast enough; it may be, most of us will think it too fast when the time comes, though we speak so daringly. Meantime, crack at leisure about quitting this beautiful world; and send for your doctor to look after your body, and send for the minister to look into your soul; and mind, my friend, to attend to the advice of both, for they both know their business and their duty well, and they may fit you either to live or die when it is God's will.'

"The doctor did his part effectually, and soon set the sinner on his feet and into his fields again. But the worthy clergyman's ministrations were poured into deaf ears and a stony heart; and, could you believe it? the very next time I saw this wretched man was in a haberdasher's shop, buying finery for a glaiket, impudent young gipsy, whom he afterwards married!

"His son, and his family, and the rest of his children, then left the house; and James took a small farm some miles distant; for, as the gash old neighbours foretold, the laird had got over the finger nebs, and would let him none of his land.

"The father returned to his work, but, as he had truly said, 'every thing was ahin'. The drains were choked, the fields were ill ploughed, the fences were broken down, and the cattle ranging in all directions, among cornfields, turnips, and hay. The potatoes were not hoed, the turnips not thinned, the corn full of thistles, dockens, and gule. His precious horses were all in bad condition; one was coughing, another was lame, a third broken-winded. Carts, ploughs, and harrows, and barrows, and harness, — shovels, and spades, and hinges, and locks, and keys, were all damaged, and disordered, and broken, and lost. He toiled, and stormed, and cursed all thro'. Turned off one servant, and beat another for insolence, who immediately left his place, by way of mending matters. His sons were away from him; nothing remained but one or two boys, who had early learned to imitate the men, who had imitated the sons, who had imitated the father; and it would have been difficult to say which of them had arrived at the highest state of perfection in the science and practice of knavery.

"The fellow he had beaten, while trudging towards the next town, fell in with one of those blights of civilized life, those cankers, gangrenes, worse than moth, and rust, and mildew, and dry rot, — a pettifogger in a petty town; and this nuisance was trudging, like himself, in quest of mischief. They were originally nearly of the same rank in life, tho' the scavenger of brawls and iniquity was a smart youth, and a beau withal. However, people generally find their level in this world, and they soon entered into conversation. The disbanded ploughman related his heavy affliction, in being forced to leave his place at mid-term without warning; and also gave a full and particular account of the thrashing he had received from his master. He was proud of the deep interest and sympathy with which so fine a gentleman entered into his case, repeated it over and over again, and redoubled his blows at every repetition. The consequence is easily anticipated, — James Barr was regularly cited to appear before the sheriff, for an assault upon his servant.

"The inextricable confusion and ruin in which he found his affairs out

of doors, put him, as may be believed, into no very pleasant frame of mind in the house. Even very good men seem but too often to imagine, that there best remedy for the ills and provocations they meet with abroad, is to make their wives and families as uncomfortable as possible at home. And, it must be confessed, that most men are, more or less, actuated by the same spirit as the brave fellow immortalized in Christ's Kirk on the Green, who, to avenge himself of the ills sustained abroad, 'gaed hame and paid his wife, for he could pay nae ither.' But James Barr, though an unprincipled, was not an ill-natured man; and circumstanced as he was now, such a wife as he had *lost* might have done much to console and assist him in head and hands, and have guided him, both in worldly and spiritual evils, through his labyrinth of misery. While she lived, he had at all times on coming home found his house, his wife, his children, and his meals, in readiness and comfort. The cows were milked; the cheese and butter made; the poultry fed; calves and pigs and chickens reared; and all these various articles prepared and arranged, and sent to market at the regular moment. He never knew, and never inquired, how these and fifty other things were done. How the blankets, and sheets, and shirts, and clothes, of himself and his family were got, or made, or mended. All things were done, *that was all he knew*. Sun set and rose, and he rose in health and strength, and went to his fields, and came home, and eat, and drank, and slept, without its having ever occurred to him that there was anything in all this for which he ought to thank God, or his wife. He never saw her dirty, or in a hurry, or angry, or toiling; so, he concluded that all that work cost no trouble or fatigue, but just came about in the ordinary course of nature — like the returns of daylight, or the different seasons — for so he had seen things go on in his father's house; and he looked upon it as a settled matter, and that it always was so, and could not be otherwise.

"His consternation, therefore, was not small, to find the state of his household affairs now; and he could not, though a clever man, he *could not* understand what was the matter; and why his house was dirty, his meals never ready, his fine wife all moiled and soiled, scolding and fuming; her clothes half put on, her fly-cap riven, and pooks of her uncombed dirty hair sticking out at the holes. He got leave to eat his ill-boiled uncomfortable porridge, by the help of a splash of blinket milk, all alone; for his wife had no time to sit down with him, and chose rather, at some other time of the morning, to breakfast on tea by herself; spending ten times as long as her husband, what with frying ham, broiling fish, or preparing some other savoury dose to season her protracted meal. Then, up she would start, and rush away to overtake and huddle through some work which should have been done three hours before, thinking herself very clever, because she was in a hurry; while the table, covered with jaups of tea and cream, half-melted pickles of sugar, half-buttered half-eaten pieces of bread, bitten pieces of ham, dirty cups and saucers, and bowls and tea-pot, was left to adorn the hitherto well-ordered comfortable apartment. The fire was left unmended, the dinner forgotten, while she was employed in alternately flying and laughing with the maids, and half-doing at mid-day the work of yesterday.

"Wet and weary and hungry, sick and sore at heart with the evils he everywhere encountered on his farm, who would not have pitied even James Barr when he came home to such a wife and such a house, and found her blowing and puffing to kindle up the forgotten fire, and to prepare some hasty smoky dose for his dinner! Her hands and arms smutted with coals and soot, and a black patch left on her nose when she wiped off the last dribble, *there* she floundered about, her handkerchief flying loose from her neck, and her dragged petticoats kilted and tied in a knot at her back.

"Had things been only one-tenth part as bad, it is probable he would have wasted himself in rage and abuse; but these things were so new to him, so utterly incomprehensible, so far beyond all appearance of ever being remedied, that it was astonishment and despair, a sort of bewildering speculation as to what all this would end in, not *wrath*, that he felt. He groaned heavily, and held up his hands in silence, as he at length saw the dirty tea-cups, and other wreck of the breakfast, hurled off the table to make room for his raw, tough, smoked, singed, disgusting dinner.

"I have often in my own mind compared the exemption from punishment which such wives enjoy, even from men who would have visited the most trivial mistake or error of an excellent woman with the bitterest reproaches, to a circumstance I have frequently had occasion to observe in the course of my business. If a rascal makes a fraudulent bankruptcy, and fails for a hundred times more than he can pay, the case seems desperate; and the creditors, rather than involve themselves in law-pleas, and other unprofitable expenses and troubles, in the vain effort to recover anything like a reasonable dividend, at once give all up, and, after muttering and blustering out a few hard names and devil-take-'ems, leave a villain, who deserves the gallows, in peaceable possession of a house and furniture, and comforts and luxuries, such as dazles their own eyes with magnificence. But when an honest man from inevitable causes is forced to declare himself insolvent, though he spends weary days and sleepless nights, and lives upon a paring that he may be able to pay them nineteen shillings in the pound; it is a fact, my dear fellow, I have seen it more than once, I have seen it often, — they will roup even to the bed he sleeps on, — *they will bring his infant's cradle to the hammer* to obtain the other shilling!

"In the midst of such a meal as those James Barr was now obliged to eat, or *want*, — a tap at the door set both his dogs on their feet, barking and growling with their teeth set, and every hair erect with rage. One of the lads held them in, while the other went to the window to see what excited such ire. 'Oh, the puir beasts,' cried he, 'just to see the naturality o' them! nae wonder they barkit, it's twa messenger chieils.' 'Messengers!' exclaimed his master. 'Ay, thae kind o' chaps that come to puir folk.' Another tap, louder than the first, announced the impatience of the visitors, and exasperated the rage of the colleys. James went to the door, and was formally served with a summons, at the instance of his discarded ploughman, to appear before the sheriff to answer for his conduct in having beaten and cruelly maltreated his servant, and putting him in fear of his life. And he was also served with another summons at the instance of this said aggrieved ploughman for payment of wages and board wages on or before such a day, both papers being properly fenced round with all right alarms and threats of the law. Having felt himself the injured party, James Barr was not a little astonished at this turning of the tables. He expressed some natural impatience and anger at the rascal's wickedness and audacity. The two fag-ends of the law spoke pacifically — said they were not to blame — were only doing their duty — and so forth; and after he had given some farther vent to his overburdened feelings in abuse of the villain who had ruined his horses, destroyed his patent plough, stolen his hay, his oats, and his beans, they walked off, leaving, as is their wont, little peace or comfort behind them.

"In the midst of his overwhelming load of cares and of work, all must be left, and he must go six miles off to consult some man of the law as to what was now to be done. As he turned from the confusion and ruin that everywhere encountered his view, and the set of wretches he left revelling in the midst of it, some internal force seemed almost to throttle him; he struck his clenched fist on his breast, and they heard him mutter, 'Oh,

— my lost wife !” And it is probable some agonizing thoughts as to the change wrought by her death, had crossed his heart.

“This expedition cost him one entire day. Much he grumbled, but soon had greater cause, for he was forced to attend first to the demands of the small debt court; then at the sheriff’s court; and thirdly, on a new charge brought against him, by the everlasting ploughman, of defamation! Hour after hour, and day after day, were consumed either in traversing the weary road, or in waiting upon the endless, and, to him, incomprehensible delays of the law. He had been a very liberal-thinking man, had most beautiful notions of freedom and equality, and a most just abhorrence of arbitrary governing. But wonderfully were these notions melted away in the furnace of his own afflictions, when he found his own wicked servant, who had cheated him, robbed him, and put his most valuable property to ruin, standing in a court of law and equity, on *more* than equal terms with himself. But, such is the perfect equality of the laws to rich and poor; and he was obliged to pay the wages of the fellow who had robbed him to twenty times their amount. He was obliged to pay a fine for having given him a beating, not the tenth part of what he deserved; and, still more hard, was obliged to pay him damages for calling him a villain, because he had not sufficient proof to bring home to him the charge of robbery. This was a species of equity he by no means liked; and the only mitigation of his rage and wretchedness was, that the judge, though obliged to give sentence according to law, it being clear the servant was guilty, reduced the fine and the damages to sixpence each, and ordered him to pay his own expenses. This was what his new friend, the amiable lawyer, had not anticipated. So he instantly threw his triumphant client into jail, his wages and his fines going but a small way to liquidate his own magnificent bill.

“Weary and sadly did unhappy James, his law concerns at last laid at rest, now take the long and, of late, hateful road to his comfortless home; where every thing seemed to be going to destruction with accelerating speed. During his attendance in those detested law-courts, even the most needful work about his farm was at a stand. No one was there now to overlook or direct when his own back was turned. The more he looked at his affairs, the more he saw, or *supposed* them irremediable. The cattle had been allowed to break into a clover field, and before any help was afforded, two of his finest cows were past recovery, and died. Many of his fine English sheep were left to perish among the briers, now overrunning every corner, and their lambs died of want. His calves were mismanaged and unfit for the market, or sold for a trifle that they might not die on his hands. A mare and her foal were stolen — his bees were not watched, swarms flew away, — the breeding sow — some said she was starved, — at any rate she was dead, and her thirteen pigs soon followed her. The fox stole his turkeys and geese, the whitterets killed the chickens and carried off the eggs, — the butter was bursted, the cheese fire-fanged, the spate swept away the lint. ‘Oh, oh, oh, God! oh, my poor, dear, dear, departed wife!’ he exclaimed. He rushed out to his barn, seized as he passed, a hank of her yarn from a reel where she left it at her death, flung it round his throat, sprung upon a cart wheel, — no cock crowed —”

Simon’s voice quivered, and he stopped. After some minutes, he added, “there is the barn, and yonder is his grave.” And getting up from his turf seat, we walked forward once more in silence.

MISPLACED AMBITION BEARS BITTER FRUIT.

"And the son," said I, after a long interval, "have you heard anything of him?" "Yes," replied Simon, "I have heard more than I wished. His poor worthy mother—she was taken away from the evil to come! Much that has come—and more, I doubt, that is yet coming. I saw the son in his dwelling, about the time of his father's untimely end; and it was he who told me all that I have repeated to you, and much more. He seemed to be getting on in a small way with his wee bit farm, but did not look contented. If I had not known the family, I might have fancied it was his father's death that was lying heavy at his heart; but found a more likely cause in the ruin that had befallen their money matters. Of the wreck of the property, after paying debts and damages, and clogs and claims of various kinds—the wife seized her tierce as the law allows; and when the remainder came to be divided among them all, it was a mere trifle—and he added with a gowl—'a body would think there was a curse in the siller—sorrow thing thrives that I buy wi' t.' 'Do your own duty well, and buy judiciously, James,' said I, 'and you may rely on it, the Lord will not deny his blessing to you and what is yours, if you pray for it sincerely.' James cleared his throat very carefully, but said nothing, and I tried to make his silence as disagreeable to him as I could by saying nothing either. He could not but know his duty; and since all he had seen and known had not roused him to think of it and perform it, all I could say might, no doubt, weary him and make him wish me at the devil, but certainly would do him no good. So we stood at bay for some time, till he went on to tell me that he was eking out his small means—by doing day's work through the winter for a neighbouring gentleman's family. 'I've been planting flowering trees and bushes along their walks, and through their policy: and ane o' the ladies, that I reckon's no very stout, they want to keep out in the open air, and she stands owre me and gies me my orders. Mony a time I've seen the gentles in the kirk, and driving about—but it is the first time I e'er was amang them, and it's wonderfu' to mysel' how different they are frae what I fancied—they're sae civil—and speak sae saft—and when I ax a question, they answer sae plain and distinct, and tell the names o' a' the plants, and the countries they come frae, and the uses they're for—Oh, Simon, I think to mysel', sic roughsome brutes as the kintra folk are! and I wish I could be like these civilized young cratures, and I wonder if I be made o' the same flesh and blood wi' them.'

"A terrifying thought flashed across my mind that the unhappy young man had let a delirious passion take possession of him; but I was mistaken in the nature of the passion, for it was not love, but ambition. 'We think, puir ignorant nowt that we are, that because they're aboon us, and no obliged to work for their bread, that they can do naething! but I ken the difference now; they're never a minute idle; and though their work be na a' like ours, have na I seen them working wi' their wee white hands in the clay, wi' as little concern for them as I hae for mine?' 'James, James,' cried I, 'what's all this folly about? What business has a man of sense like you wi' such foolish fancies and havers? By the will of God, they were born in one rank, and you in another; they have their duties, their cares and trials, and you have yours. This world is a scene of trial, a school of preparation for another life beyond the grave, for them and for you. And when your body and their bodies are laid in the dust, your soul and their souls must appear equally before God, not to answer for the rank in which he was pleased to place you on earth, but for the manner in which you, and

I, and those ladies, and everything that breathes, from the king to the beggar, have performed the duties belonging to, and fitted for our various stations. Do you suppose they are happier or freer from care than you? or have better health or sounder sleep on their soft beds under fine curtains? or that, though their meals may be dressed wi' greater care than yours, that they are more wholesome?' 'Simon,' he cried, impatiently, 'd'ye really believe I'm such an ass as to think about the meat I put into my mouth, or that I care whether my bed be soft or hard? Ye dinna ken what I mean, Simon, I ken myself'; and gin I had but their sense, I would be able to explain it. Many a time when I pass to my work in a morning, I stop and look in at the laigh windows; and I look at the sweet room covered round and round wi' pictures that they mak themselves: and when I see bonny bairnies in the pictures, wi' rosy cheeks and links o' gowden hair, I think on my ain bits o' wee things wi' faces as rosy, and hair as shining—but what will they grow up? nowt like their father! And I gang to my work wi' a bitter tear in my e'e. And at nights, when I have stayed among the servants till after dark, and then passed the window wi' the bright light streamin' out upon the green leaves; and when I stop and look in and see a' their sweet young faces round the room, some reading, some writing, some making music and singing, I look and look and listen, till it seems to be naething less than the sight and the sound o' angels; and then when I gang hame to my ain bit dark hole, lighted wi' a pickle peats and a stinkin cruizie, and look at my ain bonnie wife and my wee bit sweet weans, pur wee things! born to turn the clod, to shool muck, to tramp at a pleugh tail, and to live and die as ignorant and uncultivate as the beasts that perish, my heart's like to break.' 'Now, in the name of Heaven, James Barr,' I cried out with impatience, 'how dare you indulge such sinful, ungrateful thoughts and feelings? they can lead to nothing but ruin, ruin here and hereafter. You, a stout, healthy young ploughman, with a virtuous wife and thriving bairns! No doubt you may leave your poor innocents like the beasts that perish; nay, to envy the beasts that perish, to wish that they had never been born: and at whose hand will the Almighty require the immortal souls of the children he has trusted you with, if, by your mad wickedness, or folly, or neglect, you suffer them to grow up, as you say, like the beasts that perish? How do you dare to murmur at your lot and maunder like an idiot, because ye were na born a young lady! It is really too ridiculous, and I think the like was never heard of! If these ladies, now, should take the pet at their lot next, and because they have seen the royal family, set to the yammering and girning at not being born kings and queens; it would certainly be far more likely and not more irrational.' 'Now, stop there, Simon,' cried he, 'for ye're speaking havers in your turn, and either dinna or winna understand me. I telt you afore it was na to be grand and rich that I wanted; and thae ladies bae nae mair to wish for in this world whether they be pur or rich, for I'm sure o' this, the king on his throne, or the queen, or his daughters, ha'e na better sense, and dinna understand mair wonderful things, or read mair or wiser books than they do. And gin the wisest man in a' the world, that neither kent the king nor them by e'esight, were set in the middle o' the king and his family, and thae ladies a' mixt through ither, nae disrespect to his majesty, Gude bless him! if ye kent the ladies I speak about, and so ye may, and mony mae like them, for aught I can tell, would ye, in your conscience, haud up your face, and say to me, the wise man, or ony dizen o' wise men, wad be able to tell, by conversing wi' them, which was the king's daughters? It's no their riches I care for, it's their knowledge and their manners, and to think and speak and do like them. That's what I want.'

"This was like sheer phrensy, and what was best to say I did not know. However, I did not remain silent, in case he should suppose he had con-

vinced me, and immediately replied, 'James, could you make a chair or a table such as you see in that house you speak of?' 'No, to be sure I could not, unless I had learned.'—'Yet they are made by people of your own rank; indeed it is very likely by those who had not half your advantages; but, were you to go into their workshops, and begin to try your hand at any of those jobs, I think I might safely swear you would spoil the work, break the tools, cut your fingers, and be well laughed at for your comfort; and, if to do the most ordinary work we must serve a long apprenticeship, how much longer must the apprenticeship of the mind be to fit it for the studies and the employments of the rank you envy so much! Wealth may be attained, and often is attained, by people of the lowest ranks; but it can only procure the outside coverings of ladies and gentlemen. A gentleman or a lady's mind, and tastes, and feelings, and pursuits, and knowledge, which you justly admire so much, cannot be bought with money; they can only be obtained by the gift of God, or a long apprenticeship; and even *that* does not always ensure them, or the right use of them. Now, James, I must put you in mind of some things which I dare say are very disagreeable, to show you that from the use you have hitherto made of your opportunities, there is no hope for you beyond humbly and honestly continuing your daily labour, which will enable you to do much to farther the interests of your family, though it may never enable yourself to rise above your father's rank. Your excellent mother gave you good and early instruction, and early were ye sent to school! But, though you had good abilities, what did that avail? you played the truant two or three times a week, and when in school, did as little good, and worked as much mischief as you possibly could contrive.' He actually, in the midst of his gloom, rubbed his elbows at the recollection, and chuckled, 'Ay, I was aye a hempy!' 'The applause of the blackguard gamekeeper,' said I, bitterly, 'for some knave's trick that merited a horsewhipping, was dearer to you than the praise of either master or minister, or all the happiness that your having deserved praise would have given to your poor mother's heart. You would rather have carried the gamekeeper's bag owre moss and muir, through wind and weet, and frost and snaw, and thought yourself well rewarded by being allowed to laugh at his filthy language, or fire off his gun at a corbie! What was it to you if ye should never be able to read or write, when ye got leave to follow the laird's hounds and hunter?' 'Aye, man, I can do that yet!' cried he, triumphantly; 'mony a time the gamekeeper wondered at me, and the laird baith. Ye see I learned it wi' rinnin' aye wi' the dogs, and fleein' owre whate'er they gaid owre. Oh, we were grand friends, the dogs and me; we used to rin races thegither as if we had been a' brithers thro' ither; and whan game whyles fell on the wrang side o' a dyke, oh! it diverted the laird and a' the gentlemen weel to see me gae owre 't like a bird to lift what had fa'n. It was a sair provocation that my father angered the laird,—a' was wrang then. The gamekeeper, he grew spitefu', and he said I kilt game; but I ne'er did it til after he suspected me, and then he took the auld gun he had gi'en me awa',—it was real shabby that.' I looked at him steadily as he spoke, with his eyes on fire with delight; and when he paused at the taking away of the old gun, I said: 'Well, James, and so there bursts forth the inner man! You flung behind you, while in your power, the means by which every British subject may rise to the highest rank in esteem, and usefulness, and cultivation in every department of life; you preferred pursuits and society the farthest possible removed from mental improvement, and had no higher joy and ambition than to be the companion and the initiator of a parcel of hounds, and to learn to leap as they did. Year after year your father paid school wages for nothing,—what cared you! Your mother's heart was breaking to see you waste the most precious time of your life, and grew up

into a man, and blessed with an excellent capacity, yet scarcely able to read — what did her pining grief avail? The least sound of the huntsman's whistle, or the yelp of a hound, was enough at any time to make you forget both father and mother, and all the joy and all the sorrow they could feel; and yet here you stand overflowing with discontent because you are not an accomplished gentleman! And it does not at all appear to me that you consider you are what you are from your own fault, or that you feel any sort of remorse for neglecting the means of instruction, which, with your abilities well directed, might before now have placed you far on the road to that very rank you so much envy; indeed, I rather think you are much inclined to arraign Providence for your present situation.' 'Oh, Simon,' he cried, 'no, not Providence, now that ye've cleared my e'en; no, my puir mother, my dear mother; Lord forgie me that sae ill requited her! but oh, my father, my father! tho' he whyles gied me a lashing or a heavy thumping whan I was out o' the gate when he wanted me, or happened to be provoked at me when he was fashed, he laught at my tricks for a' that, and mony a time ca'd me a bit clever deevil, that wad either mak' a spune or spoil a horn, loud enough for my gleg lugs to hear. So I was prouder o' that sort o' praise than I was vexed at the thrashing; and as to my mother, I some gate thought it was just a fashion wi' mothers to think their ain weans didna do weel enough; so I ne'er fashed, — Lord forgie me!' 'I hope, indeed, the Lord will forgive you, James,' said I; 'but our conduct, whether good or bad, generally meets some of its reward or punishment even in this world, and so you must feel it now, as you can't but be sensible the Almighty will not work a miracle, and alter the ordinary course of providence, to prevent you dreeing the consequences of your early disobedience and sins. You would net learn to read, and write, and count, during the four years your then rich father put it in your power, and paid for your schooling to the best and cleverest master in the country. Your Maker blessed you with talents, which, well employed, might have made you a great man: but you chose to remain ignorant, and ignorant you must now remain. The season for learning is past for ever, even if you had now the time and the means. Our minds, like our bodies, grow clumsy and stiff, if they have not been exercised in our young days; and you or I might as well try to gar our great strong fingers and thumbs flee over the notes of a piano, as your favourite young ladies do, like the wind fluttering the leaves of that poplar, as one who has not learned to exercise his mind when young, need try to set it a-learning when old. So, James, take warning; you have lost your own spring-time, and you can't now reap a crop where you never sowed the seed; but you may yet reap experience, which, though often a bitter, may be a valuable harvest in our old age. Look well now to your own conduct and your own little ones; teach them obedience to yourself and their mother from their earliest hours, and do n't think if you let the infant disobey you, that the boy will do your bidding. Beware how you suffer them to slight their mother's precepts; you have but to remember your own fate to hinder you ever forgetting the importance of this. And when you send them to school, see that they do their duty there; question the master often about their behaviour; and, as you value their well-doing, enforce his precepts as well as their mother's. Though it would be folly now to set about learning things above the sphere you have fixed yourself in, there is much in it that you can learn, and that it is your duty to learn. I'm much mistaken, tho' ye've had the Bible in your possession all your days, if there is n't a good deal in it you have still to read, and much, much in it you have still to learn. Never sit bumming with it before your eyes, between sleep and awake, as if glowering at the words were all ye had to do with it. Read it aloud to your wife and bairns, a little at a time — ye'll improve by practice — and explain't to them the

best way ye can. And do n't let this be the dreary toil of a wet Sunday, but the cheerful employment of all your evenings after your work, to teach your children betimes to think of the Bible with affection as well as reverence. They know little of it who do not feel it to be one of the most interesting as well as holiest of books; and by telling your little ones, as the reward of good behaviour, the histories of the great and holy men with which it is stored, they will learn to consider hearing and reading it their greatest privilege. But you need not be confined to the Bible. If you are willing, you will always be able to find other and most useful books to read to your family. Only—mark ye, Jemmy—remember aye to wash your hands after your work, before ever ye touch a book. Nothing is so provoking as to have a book dirtied inside or outside, and the leaves folded down or crumpled; and it is the fear of having them ill used, that makes many a one unwilling to lend. But only be careful of them, and, I'll answer for it, the schoolmaster and the minister—ay—and the families ye work for, will joyfully lend you as many as ye can read. This will improve your own mind and your wife's, and enable you to instruct your children, and watch over their progress, and set them in the road to well-doing after they are done wi' school.' 'Oh, Simon!' he cried, 'oh, but ye make me a happy man! I think I see them a' ladies and gentlemen already.' 'Stop, stop; not in such a hurry, my lad. Do n't think that can be done but by long and patient toil on your part and theirs. If you expect to improve either your own mind or theirs, you must read fit books; and if you expect to read, you must waste no more time. No more sitting at night in the gentlemen's kitchen, filling your brain with vain follies; no more jawing all the idle lies in the parish at the road sides; no more clubbings in the ale-house to sing wild songs, and keep a batch of blackguards in a roar. That you must give up on many accounts: because it wastes your time—wastes your money—renders your mind and feelings perfectly unfit for virtuous pursuits—and bends all the whole man, body and soul, in a direction opposite to that you pretend to be so eager to follow;—and, James, I may add—disturbs honest travellers like me, who want a sleep after a long day's journey.'

"He coloured over the ears and brow—seemed much confounded at my knowing these things, and very willing to drop the conference: and, to say the truth, so was I; for I could not but discover, in the midst of all the enthusiasm called forth by his interviews with an accomplished family, the want of principle and utter hollowness of his father's son, which made me hopeless of doing him any permanent good. I, however, to the utmost of my power, enforced his spending his evenings in reading, and sending his children to school as soon as they were fit for it; and, on leaving him, my forebodings were not unmingled with some better hopes. It is now several years since my business led me this way; and, in the interval, I have heard nothing of James Barr. But, we are now within a mile of his cottage, and we shall go and see." As we approached the place, everything wore the aspect of desolation, and we did not need to go so far as the door to discover it was deserted. Each object round us betokened this. A window fallen in, and rank weeds waving in its place; a hole in the thatch, long grass, nettles and dockens springing round the step and from under the outer door, told a dismal tale. Simon stopped short, held up his hands in silence; and, after looking at the pitiable wreck before us for a few moments, we turned with a sigh and walked away. The first words he said were,—I will go to the schoolmaster; he is my worthy old friend, and was James's teacher; I am sure he will be able to tell us something. A mile farther on, we came within sight of the schoolmaster's house; and it being past school hours, we found him hard at work in his little garden. He received Simon most joyfully, and leaving his spade in the ground, sat down between us on the settle at his

neat, clean door. He was an active, cheerful looking man, above sixty, with a look of ruddy health and vigour in face and person, and such glances of fun and intelligence in his bright eyes as conveyed to me the idea of one who had spent his life in far other occupations than the weary, thankless, soul-consuming drudgery of teaching a parish school. And I could not help wondering what that well-spring of mental and intellectual vitality must originally have been which still sparkled so bright in the wane of life.

After a period of mutual and kind inquiries, Simon told his errand. The schoolmaster's sparkling eyes took a solemn expression. "James Barr!" he repeated, in a tone of wo. "Many chances and changes have occurred in his short life." He then went on to mention, that some years ago James had come to him with two little children to put to school, one of them so young he had refused to take it as a scholar, not only because it could do nothing equivalent to the trouble of teaching it, but it was too little to walk twice a day to and from school; and because it would be far better to let such a child romp about and gain strength, than set it to pine in a crowded room among a swarm of imps all bigger than even the oldest of these. "This," said the schoolmaster, "seemed both to vex and anger him; and he asked with some bitterness, what ill-will this was I had ta'en at his bairn; said he was determined to have her taught immediately, muttered a deal about early education, and the way to make ladies and gentlemen; and that there was a child at the Rockhouse nae bigger than her that could read as weel as I could do, though it had never been at school at all, and that his bairn was as smart as any lord or lady's bairn in the country.

"I considered him intoxicated," continued the schoolmaster; "however, I answered him peaceably, and tried to convince him that it was precisely because the child he mentioned had not been at school that it could read; that children could be taught to read, and to love reading, far earlier than was imagined, if their mothers or other friends did but take the trouble to instruct them, by giving them one letter in a day to amuse them, which could be done without fatigue or confinement; but do you think they would send a little tender infant to a public school to dree out three or four hours a-day, sitting on a high wooden bench surrounded by boisterous boys and girls of fourteen or fifteen years old? 'I will have my bairn educate,' said he in reply, and all my arguing was in vain. The constant burden of all he said was still the Rockhouse and the ladies at the Rockhouse, and their voices, and their language, and their singing, and their learning, and their everything; jumbling up his accounts of them and their accomplishments with his determinations to have his ain lassies educated; and with the most pitiable attempts to speak, as he supposed, like those ladies — which attempts consisted in altering the sound of every word he uttered. I stared at him in consternation, and asked him what the accomplishments of ladies had to do with the education of a ploughman's daughters. He replied, that it was '*idication made liddies*, and that it would make his *dotters liddies* in spite o' me, though they wuz his *dotters*.' He then broke out into ravings about their beautiful manner of speaking at the Rockhouse, and when they sing — Sing! I repeated, where do you hear them sing? 'Whan I'm sittin' wi' the lassies and the flunkies at nights, when a door opens, or when I stop at the windows and look in, and I think it maun be like the angels' sangs. But whan I'm coming hame and try to sing mysel', it's like naething but my father's auld muckle Dutch bull, that used to fright a' the folk lang syne wi' his fearsome rowtin' and skirls — their very speakin's beautifuller than ither folks' music, and I wull gar my ain weans speak as beautiful. They have nae loud speaking, nae passions, and whan ony thing gangs wrang, and I hae provokit them a gay when times mysel', though they whiles luk grave, they ne'er say a thrawn word to me.' 'Well, James,' said I, 'that's a part of their conduct you would do well to imitate;

but as to their speaking and their singing, I do declare, to hear a great broad-shouldered ploughman chield like you, a'maist twa ell and half a quarter lang, thraving your gab and minching your words, and chowing your ain tongue wi' maunderings and affectations like a drunk baboon, till mortal man canna comprehend what the sorrow ails you, or what ye would be at; in real truth it goes far beyond my patience! and this, it seems, is your trials to imitate the language of a highly accomplished family of ladies! d' ye see there, man, d' ye see how, unkenned to mysel', my hand has drawn the taws frae my pouch, burning to gie you a lethering, as mony a time they've done already; and it's only the presence of your two bairns withholds me from following the impulse, for never did you better deserve a thrashing. What the sorrow sets you to speak ony thing but your ain mother tongue, as a Scotch ploughman should? It has creditably served wiser and better folk than I doubt ye are likely to be — has carried them through the world, and brought them back again wi' honour. My word for 't, an honest Scotch tongue never will disgrace you — see that ye dinna disgrace it! But, at ony rate, don't suppose that because ye're not speaking Scotch, that ye're speaking ony other; for, as I said before, the gibberish ye're tittering is like naething but the jabberings of a drunk baboon, and will only make people laugh at you, and think ye have run mad. Ye thought when ye tried to sing an imitation of the singing at the Rockhouse, that it was like the rowting o' your father's big bull; and I can assure you for a truth, whether you believe me or no, that if the bull had been such a fule as try 't, his rowting would have been just as like their speaking or singing as yours is.' His eyes glared at me with rage, and he stamped on the earth when I said all this, and especially when I warned him on the subject of ever teaching a daughter of his more than to read, write, and sew. 'James,' said I, 'the cottar who tries to teach his daughter mair, is bringing her up for the devil. As ye value their salvation, bring them up so as to be fit wives for honest men in their own station; and not to be upsetting, drest out, would-be misses, apeing their betters wi' dirty finery, and making themselves the scorn o' rich and puir — impudent cutties, that a man o' sense would warn his son against, and nae fit company for any one better than some blackguard stable boy, or whipper-snapper flunkie.' He was furious at me, but could n't help himself, for I keepit my threep, and I keepit my temper. So off he plunged in such a rage that he didna see where he was going, and he knockit owre the bit lassie in the dirt. However, he snatched her up on his arm, and marched on wi' strides like a giant, without halting a moment, while she screight and roared like a sorrow, and the bit callan, unable wi' all his speed to keep up wi' his father, roared to his utmost for company.

"After all this dirdum, I didna expect to see him in a hurry; however, back he came next day, and entered the two poor young things at school. His anger had cooled by that time, and I rather supposed I was right when I suspected he had been drinking the day before. He borrowed a book from me, and said he would soon be back for another, as he was going to read every book in my house. Sooner than I expected, he did bring back the book, which I found he had read attentively, and with great pleasure I gave him another. Meanwhile, the Lammas flood came on, and the bit lassie and her brother were wet to the skin. I did my best to prevent the evil consequences, but day after day they were sent paidlin' thro' rain and roads knee-deep; the girlie took a cold in her chest; I gave her a lesson and sent her home in all haste with a message to her mother, advising that she should give her physie and put her into bed. The poor madman sent her back next day with a right impertinent message about my laziness, and bidding me mind my ain affairs. That night the cold ended in croup, and she was dead in six hours. Poor man, my heart was sore for him then, and

far sorer since, for after that he gaed clean heels owre head wi' madness and vice. It seemed to be anger rather than grief that he felt at the loss of the poor child; and, after having gone about gloomily silent for a few weeks, on a sudden he assumed all the worst of his old habits, went roving to fairs, ranting and singing in public houses, and the cock o' the company wherever there was noise or drinking, to the total neglect of his work. Meanwhile, as the winter advanced, there were many complaints of killing game in my lord's woods and muirs, and bleaching-greens were robbed, and hen-houses were robbed, and gardens were robbed, and no thief ever seen, and no individual ever suspected. Maybe, Simon, you may have heard that Jemmy had long been our precentor; and having a good voice and a good ear, and a good conceit o' himsel', he did very well for our bit kirk. But after this distraction about the Rockhouse, like a possession o' the enemy, had ta'en him by the head, he began to twirl, and pipe, and screw his voice, and his face, and his neck, and his words; supposing, poor man! that he was certainly singing like the ladies there. Gude help him—I wish'd mony a time he had keepit better mind o' his father's auld bull!—for truly the psalmody became anything but a means of devotion. As you may guess, the serious were fretted, and the thoughtless laughed. Still, in spite of all that could be said, he persisted to twirl his whirligigs up and down: considering all the faults that were found as the highest flattery; for he imputed the remarks of his neighbours either to envy, or to his music being so fine they could not understand it. Many a time I saw the pretty young creatures in the Rockhouse pew sair put to, to keep their gravity. But one day, when the minister had been preaching on the providential care of God over his people, he read, as the last Psalm, some verses of the xxxiv. beginning at the eighth verse. James got on as usual, changing the sound of all the vowels into is ooes, and everything but their own sound; but the afternoon being dark, and the line to be read, when he reached the tenth verse, he distinctly shouted forth, 'the lions young may hingry be,—and they may lick their fud'—which was like an electric shock to most part of the congregation, and the heads of the young things in the Rockhouse pew were instantly out of sight; but a tremulous motion of the feathers and ribbons in their bonnets showed what was going on. I saw James's eye fill with gloomy fire as he turned it in that direction, and there was a vengeful glance shot after them as they left the church, which boded them no good. Not long after this, there were various robberies about their house and garden, but no trace of a thief. Let them watch as they might, still the robberies went on, and they were much perplexed; but they are mild, forbearing people, and said little.

"One morning their only brother, who had been on his travels, partly for health and partly for study, came to see me. I had been his father's early tutor, and it was he who placed me here. They have always been very kind to me, and this dear young man had now returned strong and healthy, improved in body and mind. He had a fine dog along with him, which he had carried from home a puppy. It had been the faithful guard and companion of all his wanderings; and, as such, having always been spoken to as a rational creature, it had actually become so to a degree nearly incredible. 'Albion,' said my young friend to me, 'made a prisoner last night.' I looked for an explanation, and he told me that having heard of the many peculations that had been committed lately round the house, without informing any person, he had gone out the evening before with his dog, and showed him where he was to watch, and giving him a lair to sleep upon, he left him for the night. Delighted with the beauty of a soft autumnal morning, he had risen with the sun, and without recollecting the office to which he had appointed his dog, had strolled out to take an early walk, and passed into the garden. He saw a countryman sitting on a barrow

with Albion lying at his feet, and supposed it was one of the work people. On his coming in sight, the man attempted to get up, on which the dog instantly seized him. 'Albion,' he cried, 'what are you about?' Albion pattered with his feet in token of joy at seeing his master, but kept his hold. 'What ails you at the man, Albion?' he repeated; when coming in sight of the wretch's downcast guilty look, the truth instantly flashed upon his mind; and he asked him how he came there, and what he wanted? He had come in for some tools he had forgotten in the yard, and the dog would not let him out again! 'You have been rather unlucky in the time you chose to come into the garden,' said the young gentleman, 'and I suppose, rather unlucky in your mode of entrance, otherwise I think my dog would not have kept you here. Pray, how came you in?' The prisoner was silent. Albion had relaxed his hold, but stood close by the man's foot with a watchful suspicion, which convinced his master that there had been more than one attempt made to escape. He heard a footstep in the garden, and observing it was one of his sisters, went to meet her. The prisoner saw her also; and, with one bound nearly cleared the wall, but Albion reached the top at the same instant, caught him by the throat, and they both fell on the opposite side. Both brother and sister ran — she to the nearest door by which she could reach the spot, and he to the wall, over which, though he could not fly at a bound, he climbed by the help of the wall-trees, and let himself drop. They were moved by the same impulse, equally afraid for the safety of man and dog. The brother, knowing that brave Albion would never loosen his hold but with his life; and dreading much what a desperate villain might do to rid himself of his enemy. But even before he lighted on the spot, Albion had found an ally in a large pointer which had been coursing about close by, and hearing the mortal broil, had instantly joined issue with his four-footed brother. Whether this was from a fellow-feeling, or from having had any previous pique at the adversary, can't well be known; and it might be merely from the moral principle, in men and dogs, which inclines them to take the part of the weakest. Like our excellent old friend, Simon, whom you and I remember, when he came in sight of a very large and a very little man wrestling together, without one thought or inquiry as to who was in the wrong, he instantly pushed his eager face and white bald brow through the crowd, shouting aloud, 'Five pounds — five pounds, I say, to any one who will knock down the big man!' The prisoner, on finding the unexpected reinforcement Albion had received, ceased to struggle, and my young friend found the two dogs standing guard over him, as he lay on the ground — panting quick, their tongues out, and looking eminently happy. The young lady next arrived, pale and trembling from horror and fright, and on seeing the prisoner, who made a vain effort to hide his face, she uttered, with a shriek, 'James Barr!'

"She pleaded hard with her brother to let him go; and as none of the servants had seen him, and the dogs could tell no tales, she hoped this morning's events would remain unknown, and that he would remember them as an awful lesson. The ungrateful scoundrel made all sorts of concessions and promises; he was released from the dogs, and was out of sight in a moment. Albion seemed to understand that this was no joyous occurrence, and stood and walked patiently alongside the brother and sister, as they talked on this grievous subject; and she explained to him who this man was, how much work he had done for them, and how much they had been disposed to show him kindness. Albion, however, at last began to whine. He looked earnestly in his master's face, stood up, struck his arm with his great white paw, then ran towards the garden, frequently stopping and looking back. 'Now Albion has something to tell or to show, connected with this affair,' said he to his sister; 'see, he wants us into the garden. — Well, sir,

what now?" The animal immediately found he was understood, gave a bound, wagged his tail, and sprung forward.

"He first led them to the place where the culprit had been seized, and showed them all the garden tools tied together and ready to carry away: then he turned over with his nose and began to pull about a large sack. Ho, ho, they thought, so he was to have carried them off in the bag! But Albion tossed away from the bag, and bounded towards the wall where the ripest fruit grew, and under every tree lay a heap of the choicest ready pulled. The dog stood by while they wondered over the extent of the intended robbery, and walked before them from tree to tree. His master fondled him, repeating several times, 'But, Albion, my dog, how did he get in? Show us *where* he came in!' On which he scampered off to a corner where one of the outhouses was built against the garden wall: and though the rascal had showed how small an obstacle the wall was to him, he had, while employed by the family in the grounds and garden, artfully provided that corner with sundry projecting stones, and branches, and holes — forming a sort of imperceptible stair to facilitate his retreat when loaded with spoil. This corner was at the opposite angle to the spot where he was found sitting on the wheelbarrow; and it was obvious that Albion had silently suffered him to carry on his proceedings till he arrived at this ultimate point; but, that the moment he attempted to turn and carry off the tools and the sack, he had interposed his irresistible arguments to prevent it.* My young friend spoke much of the wicked ingratitude of this bad man, who, he understood, had received much kindness from his father's family; and who, by haunting about the servants, the kitchen, and outhouses, had got so thoroughly acquainted with their whole establishment, that he did not doubt he would yet rob the house; and that he felt as if guilty of a crime in not informing the fiscal against him — a villain so unprincipled and so dangerous that he could go over a wall like the fleetest hound. He begged me to keep my eye upon him, and to let him know from time to time if there were any more robberies heard of.

"I heard of no more robberies; but soon heard that James Barr was roused out of his house, and was away, I could scarcely discover where. He was occasionally seen; but it was about two years before he and I met. I had gone to the town, seven miles off, to buy stationary and books for the school; and was trudging home again in the cool of a beautiful summer evening, when, on turning round, I saw a figure so tall between me and the setting sun, I felt certain it could be no one but he, and he soon overtook me. He was much altered in his appearance; his clothes were dirty and shabby; he had a scab on one lip, a blue mark over and under one eye, and four of his fine white front teeth were away. When the red glow of the sun-set fell across his hairy, ruddy face, he really seemed a very coarse, savage-looking man. However, we had a frank meeting, if not so affectionate on my part as it might once have been; and we walked and talked together. I found him, as ever, quite unprincipled, but liable at moments to qualms of better feeling — the remains of a natural good temper and kind disposition, and the knowledge of duty his excellent mother had toiled to instil into him. His ruling passion, vanity, was as inordinate as ever; and

* A respected friend has remarked that "the dog is too wise;" but the editor ventures to suppose that this gentleman has not indulged in canine friendships and intimacies, otherwise he must have known that such sagacity as Albion's is by no means uncommon. In a small but respectable and perfectly authentic work, published in Edinburgh, many years subsequent to the date of Albion's feats — there is much recorded to the honour of those faithful and affectionate friends of ungrateful man, not merely of their attachment and fidelity, but of their reasoning powers — quick perception of right and wrong — and presence of mind. The editor, also, is in possession of many unquestionable facts, on this subject, of such a nature as make Albion appear, so far as the above particulars go, a very ordinary dog.

when he thinks he has performed any feat of agility, however villanous, or done or said anything he considers clever or amusing, I feel perfectly persuaded this delirious rage for admiration would impel him to tell it, though at the risk of his neck; and yet he is not, and never was, a man of courage, or willing to face either death or danger. During a long conversation, in which the subject warmed and animated him, I could easily discover that he had been leading the life of a smuggler and a poacher. Alas, alas, his poor mother! When roused out, he had fitted to the verge of the weary and wide moor; and it being summer, had erected a sort of shealing, to which he conveyed his desolate wife and family, there to live by their wits. Every acre of the moor, and all its thickets and coverts for game, being from childhood well known to him, by snaring and shooting with a little pistol, which I supposed was stolen, as it was mounted with silver, and had a coronet on it; and the help of one or two dogs of his own rearing, half terriers, half hounds, with all the sagacity of the one and all the speed of the other, he contrived to make a tolerable living among the game; and to procure the means of erecting a somewhat more habitable hovel before winter set in. He also took in a bit of the moor for potato-ground; and hiving, as I could guess, made himself welcome to potatoes for seed from the nearest farmers, and fuel from a peat-moss in the moor, as he said himself, suddenly assuming his sublimest style of elocution, 'he was enabled, although it might be on the cold bare grun', to spread his *table* in the wilderness.' Indeed, Simon, the dominie rose in my impatient spirit to hear a wretch in such circumstances, who had hurled his wife and family to destruction, uttering such stuff. Though I thought it was beneath me to answer him, I could not keep from saying, 'until you are able to move your table and your bed aff the bare grun', I wish ye would gie o'er speaking like a preposterous fule.' And, as I said it, I fand my hand in my pouch grasping the taws.

"After he had recovered from this paroxysm of genteelity, I asked for the second time where he had been during the last year. 'In bridewell,' he replied with the most disgusting effrontery. 'In bridewell!' I repeated with horror, not, as you will guess, from surprise at his being in a place to which he had so many titles, but at the callous wickedness his reply displayed. 'And for what were you in bridewell?' 'For shooting a pairtrich or a mawkin, or some bit beast o' that sort; it's little matter whilk o' them it was. If a man kill the vermin that's devourin his bits o' stooks, and that ha' na left a heart in a' his winter-kail and cabbage, or a turnip in his grun', or a striffin o' bark or a green leaf in a' his bit yard, and maun be punished for't just the same as if he had puzioned his wife, or thrawn the neck o' his wean — it maks little odds what faut he commits, whether it be a sma' faut or a great faut, or nae faut ava.' 'So,' said I calmly, 'and this is your bridewell morality, is it? And will it also be the same thing at the day of judgment whether a man is convicted of a great crime or a little one?' 'Tuts,' cried he, with the utmost impatience, 'there ye are again wi' your day o' judgment! Ye've had a sair fecht wi' that same day o' judgment o' yours a' your ain days — I wuss ye may be ready for't yourself gin e'er it comes.' 'Amen!' I replied, solemnly. 'If I am not, it will not be from my ever haying madly dared to think of it with blasphemous disregard. Poor, lost, miserable man, can it be possible your pious mother's son has actually uttered such words?' He seemed to be a little struck, and to feel that he had done wrong; but went on — 'Weel, but ye see, maister, that's the sort o' talk I ha'e heard muckle o' for some gay twa three months by-past, or I wadna hae said it. It shockit me a wee at first, but I soon got aboon a' that; and sae will ye, gin ye should be as lang in bridewell. 'I don't feel particularly ambitious of trying,' said I. 'But, after a' now, maister,' he continued, 'what I said's no sae far wrang

as ye think; for I'm sure ye ken there's mony o' the best o' preachers aye tellin' us that we'll gang to hell for the sma'est o' sins as fast as for the biggest, if it's sae ordained; aye, even wee bits o' new-born unchristened weanies; and gin they've fund out sic things as that in the Bible, and they say they aye preach frae the Bible, ye needna wonder at my misdoubting if there will be a day o' judgment. Will ony body tell me what would be the use o' 't, if we were a' fore-ordened to hell or heaven thousands o' years afore we were born? I ha'e often heard ministers preach this doctrine, and the folk, maistly, like it weel; but I ne'er took muckle thought about thae things till I was in bridewell. There, ye see, some were in for an offence and some for anither; some, like mysel', for nae sin ava, and a' were getting the same punishment; so we could account for 't nae gate but that we were ordeend till 't; and that since we couldna help oursel's or our sins, and were a' sinners thegither, whether we wud or no, and couldna, by the lives we led, mak oursel's either better or waur, it was best never to fash our beards, but just live as we likit. And if it was ordeened, we wud be saved after a'. Some spoke about getting a call, and a cast o' grace, and justification, and the new birth, and a' the like o' that: but what's the use o' fiddlin wi' this or that mean? I'm sure it's plain to ony man's reason, if it's fore-ordened that he's to gang to heaven, he need ax nae mair about the matter. And if he's to gang to hell, my faith! he'll ken 't and find it sune enough, I'se warrant him.' 'These are bridewell doctrines, with a vengeance,' said I. 'Na, ye needna say that; ye've heard them preached in our honest auld minister's ain pulpit; and mony a time we've heard them in the tent. It was na the way our ain minister preached, nae doubt; for, like yoursel', he keepit aye a safr fasherie amang us about our duties—our duties—honest man!' 'Hold, I charge you, not another word!' cried I, bitterly. 'Don't think I will enter into controversies with a drunken profligate, whose wicked life has turned heart and conscience to stone; who hates the glorious light which should bless and guide him, and gropes in the blackness and darkness of eternal death, because his deeds are evil; who finds in the religion of Christ an excuse for his crimes!—who has dared to read the word of God, not to find mercy to pardon, not to find light to guide, not to obtain grace to learn his duty; but, like some venomous reptile which concocts its poison from the most wholesome food, has dared to search the Holy Bible, and study its sacred doctrines, with the horrible intent to find reasons why he may commit crimes with impunity! James Barr, your poor mother was laid in good time in the dust!' 'Master,' he said, in an humble voice, 'ye're gaun owre far. I didna study that I might sin. But, after crimes were committed, ye'll no think it unnatural, if, like ithers round me, I was willing to tak up ony notion to pacify my conscience for the time, though maybe it has made me the wretch I am, and ever shall be now, I doubt!' His voice sunk into such a tone of exquisite misery as he uttered these last words, that my heart was quite overcome. 'James,' I said, 'poor young man, may God forgive your sins and crimes, from whatever fatal cause you have been tempted to commit them! I advise you, banish such hallucinations of devils as you allude to from all your thoughts; for it is not more certain that we see yon beautiful moon, and those bright stars in the sky, than it is certain that every doctrine derived from the word of God is, and must be, full of justice, and wisdom, and mercy. Clouds and thick darkness surround his throne; but justice and judgment ever go before his face. In that word there are many things beyond the reach of our limited reason; but, however limited, however weak, it is still a reflection from the divine mind, after the image of which, we are told, God created man. The Bible, then, 'given by inspiration of God,' can contain nothing in contradiction to it.

"It is enough for us that our Saviour has told us that the duties he re-

quires of us are so plain and explicit, that they who run may read, and the simple wayfaring man may understand. No one can mistake his gracious invitation to us as sinners, to come to him for mercy, or his injunction, that we should do to others as we would that others should do to us ; or what is meant by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God. Every page of the Bible informs us of the duties required of us, and distinctly tells us the characters of those who shall go to heaven, and who shall not. You have nothing to do in practice with the doctrine of predestination, or with the difficulties that accompany it. You may quibble as you like about this doctrine, but when the Bible accuses you of doing what you know to be wrong, you cannot deny that your own conscience supports the charge, and brings you in guilty. You are addressed as an accountable being, and told you shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil. These, James, are the truths I meet with in the Bible, which I read and study that I may learn the way in which I am to obtain the pardon of my sins, and my duty to God and man ; not to puzzle my poor brains attempting to comprehend the mysterious counsels of him whose thoughts are not as our thoughts. Oh ! James, James, do you read it for the same purpose, and in the same spirit ?" He did not answer, and we walked on a long while in silence. What my ruminations were, I need not tell ; what *his* were, I cannot — probably they were idle enough. To starts of feeling, and a consciousness of his own lost condition, and a burst of passion at the thoughts of it, he was still accessible ; but it availed not. His mind was quite unimpressible, and his conscience growing seared. To reason with him — to convince him, was all in vain — mere writing on the sand ! I had become sensible of this years ago ; and yet, always when we met — perhaps from my long habit of teaching — I was ever tempted to make an effort for his good, which ever ended in blank, disheartening disappointment.

"I inquired for his wife and children. 'Trowth she's but middling ; sair fashed wi' the rheumatics, and unco low and dull ways. The weans, puir things ! they're stout enough. Jemmy's growing a bit strong handy chiel ; but I can get nae schulin for them in the muir : ' and I heard a smothered sigh, and even by the moonlight I could see the indescribable look of shame and trouble that passed across his now haggard countenance ; but he hurried from the subject to what the infatuated fool seemed to consider a sufficient excuse, because it was the cause of their remaining untaught, his miserable life of doubt and dread in the wild wide moor after the winter was set in ; when the wants of his family were so much increased, and the danger of every attempt to procure food tenfold, from the numbers of gentry who hunted there even early in the autumn, and far on in the spring. Rain and soft dew in the lower lands were snow and hoar-frost in the moors ; of course, every footstep left a trace, and the print of either his own foot or his dog's were, at such times, a means of detection and an evidence against him. Every sight, and every sound, filled him with alarm. 'The wicked are afraid where no fear is.' Whole nights he passed in the dangerous, swampy, icy moor, searching for game ; which, when he discovered, he was often terrified to shoot lost the report of his pistol should betray him. His dogs had been trained never to bark ; but he often dreaded even to whistle upon them ; and the sight of a human figure, at ever so great a distance in the heath, alarmed him to such an extreme, that he would plunge into the hags of the peat bog, or lie half covered with water in the marshes, or smothering among the tall heather, for hours together, trembling at the least rustle made by the very birds and hares he was waiting to kill.

"He observed that in one direction, in particular, he had more frequently

than any other seen figures moving among the hills, and therefore shunned it. But one day, having step by step glided for an hour after game almost insensibly towards that quarter, he suddenly came in sight of a man; but, instead of being instantly seized, as he expected, the person sprung off in all speed and disappeared. Then came his impudence and cunning to his aid; and, having concluded that this must be a poacher like himself, he determined to be rid of a rival: so, taking his pistol openly in his hand, he got on his feet, gave his dogs the watch-word, and set about a search. In a few minutes the enemy was unearthed, and he and his active agents had him by the throat. He pointed his pistol at the breast of the prisoner, and had the audacity to go through the farce of seizing him as a poacher, in the name of my lord, who is proprietor of the moor. The man then averred he was not a poacher, — that he had neither dog, nor gun, nor snare, nor any other means of taking or disturbing game; and at length, to escape the more immediate danger, confessed he had a still in the moss, from which he and his comrades supplied the country round with whiskey. On this joyful intelligence, James gradually lost sight of his assumed character of gamekeeper, and soon accompanied the released prisoner to the smugglers' den, where he speedily constituted himself their agent and assistant, with heart and hand.

"The cares, toils, and perils of his additional profession more than doubled his anxieties, and far, far more than doubled his real dangers and crimes. His astonishing agility, and great personal strength and height, made him a most precious acquisition to this respectable brotherhood, where each was alternately teacher and scholar of knavery, expedients, and tricks. Morning, noon, and night — through cold and heat, rain and snow, darkness and tempests — in dread of heart and peril of body — they pursued their wretched occupation; lurking in holes, skulking along byways, through briers and bogs the most inaccessible and impassable; at once timorous and fierce; hating the light, dreading the sight of a beaten path, the barking of a dog, or the sound of the human voice; they were obliged to make long, fatiguing, and dangerous circuits to reach the nearest points, as the chance of leaving any trace or scent leading directly to their retreats was the greatest danger of all. 'And what,' said I, 'oh, James, what in the name of the great God, you have forsaken! What was the profit of all this servitude — this bondage to Satan? Did you grow rich? Did you live more abundantly? Was your wife happier, and better lodged, and better clothed — and your children better fed, and clad, and taught, than those of the farmers of your father's rank, or even of their cottars, that you should, of your own free will, enter upon such a life? What was your temptation to enter on it? What was your temptation to continue in it? What, I say, has been your reward?' 'The wages of sin is death,' said he, attempting to laugh and answer lightly. 'But, ye see, I hadna the drudgery o' delving, and ploughing, and toiling, day after day, and week after week. I was free, ye ken; I did as I likit, and ca'd nae man maister.' 'Ye were free!' I cried in utter impatience; 'ye had nae drudgery, that were in toil, and jeopardy, and bondage, ye puir, blinded, bewitched slave of smugglers and the devil! Hunted and terrified ten thousand times worse than the wild beasts of the desert! Ye were free, that durst neither eat nor sleep by night or by day, but wi' a cocked pistol in your hand. And ye ca'd nae man maister, who, besides your maister the devil, had a maister in his very slaves, the smugglers ye served, and durst not disobey, since, by your own account, they had but to give a hint to any of the gamekeepers round, to send you and yours to perdition. You will brag that ye did na need to delve or plough! Ye cruel villain, if ye did na delve and plough, who did it? Ye call it toil — you with the strength of an ox in every arm and leg; and so ye left it to be done by your sick, and sad, and forsaken wife, and the little

tender hands of your ruined bairns—left them, heartless and helpless, to struggle any way they could among the clods, that they might have a mouthful of honest-gotten food in the potatoes they raised to keep them from starving, when ye durst not show your felon's face in the moor!" "And wha telt you a' that, maister?" said he rapidly, and staring in my eyes. "Deny it if you dare," I replied, seeing by his looks that I had hit on the truth; "deny it if you dare. A true and living witness from the moors has told me—one who, if you do n't speedily change your ways, will bring that neck of yours to the gallows, if a more sudden and horrible fate does not prevent it. Deny that you got that mark in your mouth, which will go with you to the grave, at a time and in a way that would make yours a bloody grave, were I to speak out. Deny it if you dare," said I fiercely, and stared in his coward face.

He became as livid as clay, and seemed to lose the power of speech; for his lips moved, but his voice was mute. I was appalled at the effect of my own assertions, grounded on what he had told me, and his appearance, added to the accounts in the newspapers, some months before, of a bloody contest between smugglers and a party of excisemen, who had met in the moor, in which there were lives lost on both sides. I scarcely knew what to do; but at length bethought me of pushing a pinch of snuff up his nose, which instantly roused him with a furious fit of sneezing. When it abated, I laid my hand on his arm, and said to him solemnly, "James, I have no intention of ever informing against you: do n't be afraid of me; but, while it is yet time, oh! oh, fear Him who can thrust both soul and body into hell." He covered his face with one hand, and said, in an agony, "It was not intentional; I had nae thought or purpose o' harming ony living: but when the excisemen cam on us, we were cowering in our den at our bit supper, and I banged out o' ane o' the holes we had for escapin by, and sprang clean out owre the roof; but the hut was surrounded, and I lighted on the tither side, just on the tap o' him. Wi' the butt-end o' his horse-pistol he struck me on the mouth, and seized me by the throat. Oh, O Lord have mercy on me, for it was not intentional! It was in the terrors o' that awfu' moment I let aff that damned wee pistol!" and he struck it and his hand furiously on the earth, where we had sat down. His jaws seemed to become fixed; his eyes protruded, and his nostrils rose and fell with every breath, like an over-ridden horse, while large drops stood thick upon his ghastly face. I sat immoveable in horror, and did not even attempt to speak.

"After a long interval, he exclaimed, 'Who could tell on me? It was dark: no ane saw me lowp owre the den; nane saw him strike my mouth. The instant I fired, I flung myself on the grun', for fear I might be kent by my height. I spoutet through the heather like an eel, till I cam to a hole in the moss, whar I sank myself up to the neck, and drew a whin bush owre my head. Wha could see me? I lay there as lang as I heard the least sound. I heard them wonderin' wha had killed their companion, and I ken nane o' them saw me. I heard them lamenting owre his untimely end, and speak o' the fearfu' task of carrying hame his bluidy corp to his widowed mother and his only sister. But oh, maister, maister, sure am I, nane o' them, no not even his mother, could ha'e such agonies as me! I conjectured, from the officers' remaining to carry awa' the dead body, that the smugglers had a' fled, and when at last I heard them and their horses' feet, and the cart-wheels move awa' in the opposite airt, about day-dawn, I came out o' my hole, and, without dauring to rise on my feet, I creepit for miles and miles thro' the whins and heather, in terror for light, and in horror for darkness; and about the gloamin', cauld and wat, and hungry, and harrowed wi' fear and grief, I ventured into my ain puir miserable hame, whare, to tell the truth, they were ill enough aff. Wae's me! I have, indeed, gien soul and body for that which is not meat! Och me! Och, but Satan has

been a hard task-master to James Barr. When I lay in that hole in the moss, the very minute the terror o' the living was removed, did he fill my soul and body and spirit wi' agonies o' terror for the dead. I wudnae hae lookit ahint me for a king's ransom, sae certain was I that the dead excise-man stood bluidin at my back! Oh, maister! maister! I wish I had ne'er been born!" 'James,' said I, 'while there's life there's hope!' 'It's past! it's past!' he cried. 'No, James; how often have you sung, "While yet the lamp holds on to burn, the greatest sinner may return." Turn to God and God will turn to you, and have mercy upon you!' 'I am desperate—I need na try.' 'James,' I reiterated, 'who is it that says, I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance? I think your mother's son might show more acquaintance with his Bible.' 'Ay, my puir gude mother did a' she could to mak us gude like hersel', but some gate, I was aye thinkin o' something else, and ne'er heeded what she read or gart me read. And since *she* was ta'en awa, I've had sma' commerce wi' my Bible, maister, I can tell you. Wae's me! sae's seen on me now! helpless and hopeless, lost, lost, lost.' "'Come to me," says our Saviour, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" O James, all is at stake, soul, body, and estate. Now is the time! now is the day of salvation. When the wicked man turneth from the wickedness that he hath done, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Oh, bless the gospel which holds out such hopes, and which calls you to arise and go to your Father, and say to your Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; and which not only assures us that they who turn to God he will in no wise cast out, but that there is joy among the angels in heaven over every sinner that repenteth. Oh, James, cry out with heart and soul to the living God, Oh, be merciful to me a sinner! and the merciful God and Saviour will not leave you to perish in your sins! will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax!' 'Oh, master, master, the time is past,' he cried, as he dashed himself on the ground. 'James, hear me; does not our Saviour himself tell us that those who were standing idle at the eleventh hour, were received into the vineyard and obtained the reward?' 'Ay, but they were only idle,—have I been only idle? they worked—they were willin' to work! I canna work! The Ethiopian canna change his skin. I'm o'er fou o' ill habits and ill thoughts; there's nae room in my heart now to let in what's gude or holy. Folk maun work out their ain salvation wi' fear and trembling. I can fear and tremble; the deevil has learnt me that! but I canna pray, I can do naething that's gude. And tho' I might fecht and struggle and strive to be gude for a wee, I ken how it would a' end; for I've tried, I've tried or now, and then some deevil wud come owre me again; and tho' I might try for a while to resist the temptation, it was a' ane at the hin'ner end. It's no true that gin ye withstand the deevil he'll flee from you; at least, he ne'er flees far frae me, unless it be to gang and bring seven deevils stronger than himsel'; and then, what comes o' me then? mad, mad, possessed? Ye see, my gude auld friend, its just in my fate; I canna gang by't.' Then lowering his voice, he said in a deep and desperate tone, 'I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation; that muckle o' the Bible's true at ony rate, and so I feel. Oh, my bairns! my bairns! Oh, gin I had ne'er been born! My Jemmy! my Jemmy!' and he sprung to his feet with a bound that made me start, flew into the copsewood behind, and disappeared, leaving me fixed to the spot with surprise and sorrow for several minutes. I then rose, and, sad and heart-sick, I pursued the remainder of my solitary way home, and have never since heard of unhappy James Barr."*

* This man's son, James, was lately tried for his life on a charge of robbery and murder. The evidence of the murder was defective, and the jury brought in a verdict of not proven.

POOR JANET.

* * * * *

"But, in the first place, here is another worthy person who is a living, if not an illustrious proof of the power of doing good on small means. That little old woman sitting yonder spinning, set out in life with just as much capacity as to enable her to eat and drink without slaving. After a time she learned to put off and on her own clothes — which new accomplishment was succeeded by that of gathering potatoes after they were turned up with the grape — that tool, which my good old master used to call 'his agricultural trident.'

"Jenny next learned to drop potatoes in the planting season; and, after years of apprenticeship — she could at length be trusted to weed lint and turnips — and her ultimate effort, in this line, was to shear. While such were her acquirements out of doors — her evenings in winter were not spent in idleness — and she successively learned to darn, to knit stockings, and to spin. By the exercise of these various talents she managed to keep herself above want; but as no one would hire her for a servant, she continued to possess the hut in which her parents had lived and died.

"One day when Jenny was sitting at the door spinning, a woman, whom she had never seen, came suddenly up to her from the toll-road, saying, 'Do hold that wean a minute, till I lift my kist aff that carrier's cart;' and, placing an infant on her knee — she turned the corner of the hut, and was out of sight in an instant. The little innocent sat cooing and smiling in her face, and poor Jenny was much flattered by its notice! She thought the woman was long of coming with her chest, but waited patiently, much delighted with the child's good humour. In short, the woman never returned; and you may imagine the consternation and dismay that ensued: but this poor creature actually fed and clothed, and brought up this child with the utmost tenderness and affection. No doubt, her richer neighbours did not fail to help her by their contributions — particularly of clothes — but, still, the heavy end fell upon Jenny, who, though she *accepted of presents* for the little stranger, never was known to ask assistance from any one."

By this time we were quite up to the spot where the old woman was sitting, with a most rueful countenance, spinning at her door. "Well, Jenny," said Simon, jovially, "hew is a' wi' you, my old friend?" "I daurna compleen," was her reply as she stopped her wheel. "I'm sorry that's a' ye say," said Simon, "for I know you have a good contented spirit, and are thankful for all your mercies." "Ay, ye're a gude man, Simon, ye think the best o' every body — but I'm no contented enow, Simon, though some folk thinks it's a mercy that," — here she made a most hideous face and burst into uncontrollable grief — crying and sobbing — "they think it's a mercy — a mercy that — that they've stown awa my wean. My darling bab! — they ca' me a fule to greet for her — that's nae faut o' mine. I ken I'm a fule — I was a fule a' my days — but I wad be waur than the beasts of the field gin I could lose the wee lamb — my wee pet lamb — that sleepit in my bosom — that ate the half of my morsel — and got its bits o' claes frae aff my ain back. — Oh, what wad I be gin I could hae her reaved frae me and no sorrow! A vera cow will rowt and rampage and refuse its meat if its neighbour cow be ta'en awa."

Simon did his best to sooth the poor creature, and asked her when the child had been taken away, and by whom. She replied that after her little innocent had been about six years with her, she had determined to send her to school, for which purpose she saved three halfpence a week to pay for teaching her in a neighbouring village, where she came on quickly with her

learning; and after she could read, by the help of some good ladies, she was enabled to continue her at school to learn writing and sewing. "She gaed awa to the schule as usual," continued Jenny, "this day eight days, wi' her bit bread and cheese for her dinner tied in a napkin, but cam na back at night; and whan it began to grow dark, I ran, like ane wud, to the maister's house, but, before I got breath to speak, — 'What's come o' your bit lassie the day, Janet,' quo' he, 'she ne'er played the truant afore;' wi' that, maister Simon, my head span roun', and there was a weary sough in my lugs, and I kenna what came owre me. The schulemaister and his wife were unco kind to me, and sent a' gates to seek after my wee lamb, but naething can we hear, for certain, but that, the day she was ta'en awa, the screech o' a bairn were heard out o' a covered cart travelling Glasgowward. Folk tell me it's a sin to greet, and that it's the Lord's mercy that I'm quat o' a fremd bairn that cost me sae muckle; but och, och! that's a' they ken! You, maister Simon, and maist ither folk, hae a weel plenished house, wi' bairns or friens o' your ain to mak you a canty fire-side. But what had I? Naething but my wee lamb! Wha cares for auld haverel Jenny? No ane but her wee sweet lamb. She kent na and cared na whether I was daft or wise; I was kind to her when she had nae ither friend. When her father and her mother forsook her, the Lord gave her to me, and she gave me a' the love o' her wee, warm, kind heart. I looked to her as the staff o' my auld age, ane that would mak my bed, and haud my head whan I was deeing, and close my e'en when I was dead! but I'm my lane now! My house is cauld and dark, and silent like a grave! My wee lamb, wee happy smilin' lamb, that was aye playing about my han', aye whudding up and down, and makin' my pair rafters ring wi' her glee — whare is she now? I wish I were dead! but she's awa that would greet on my grave, and there's no ane left in the world to say 'wae's me' — when I'm laid i' the moul's!"

Simon stood silent for a long time, while the poor creature continued to sob and cry; and when he did speak, all he said had little effect in abating her grief; and we could only hope that its violence would wear it out. There she sat with her apron thrown over her head, and her whole frame shook by the heavy fetches of her breath. So, after laying a memorial of our good-will upon her wheel — we trudged on, much affected with this instance of the superior value of the humblest capacity united to good temper, and the sincere desire to be useful and charitable — even in a rank of life but one degree above beggary — to the most splendid talents, without goodness of heart and sound principles!

"Truly," said Simon, "the worth and merit of this poor woman is very great. When we consider how much would be thought of an individual or family, in a rank and with means incomparably superior to hers — should they take in — clothe — feed and educate a stray child: what is due to this poor creature for doing the same? When we consider that every morsel put in the child's mouth was saved off her own stinted meal — and every stitch of clothes it wore were, as she said just now, taken from her own back, and how hard, late and early, she must have worked, to procure even the additional pittance to pay her schooling! Oh! we may rely upon it, however this poor weak creature's merit may be thought of *here*, it will be remembered up yonder," said the good man — raising his dark eyes glistening to heaven — "poor Janet, and her humble worth, will be remembered when many a splendid deed, which received the applause of multitudes here below, is forgotten, or obscured in gloom."

HEAVEN SMILES ON GENEROUS DEEDS.

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WHEN we came out of church, the greater number of the respectable farmers, instead of returning to their homes between the two services, seated themselves in groups; some on the mossy grave-stones in the church-yard, some more distant under the venerable trees that shadowed the continuation of the enclosed ground, where it sloped from the back of the church towards a rushing stream, the sound of whose glad waters came sweetly to the ear, blended in unison with all the other sounds that speak creation's joy—never listened to with a deeper sensation than when we stand amid the countless tenants of the silent tomb! I had unconsciously wandered from one to another of these tombs, reading on their little granite tablets the simple records of the peasant race who slept below, till turning to look for Simon, I saw him seated amongst a group of elderly men, who seemed engaged in a most animated debate. On joining them, I found that the sermon we had just been listening to was the subject, and I could not but admire the strong natural sense which dictated many of the remarks made by these untutored and unlettered men.

One imbittered-looking old man, with a dress indicating less wealth, and I thought less cleanliness than the others, was declaiming, as I drew near, against what he called "the abounding iniquity o' sic doctrines."—"What! does he mean to preach that a man may cut an carve his ain fortin' in this warld as ye wad cut a bit cheese, and that a' things will work just as he acts, gude or ill?" "Na, na," said an old man on whose bald head time had scarcely spared one silver hair, 'the minister said nae sic a thing, John; dinna misrepresent his meaning—he said, that independent of that eternal meed of glory or of dool awaiting the good and the bad in the world beyond the grave, that even in *this* world a good or an evil action seldom went without a sort o' proportionate reward.'—"Weel, weel, what's that mair nor I said, sirs; man, I wonder to hear ye uphauding sic nonsense; look into the warld, and tell me, is every honest man rich, and every deeviltoch, leeing, cheatey rascal puir? I trow no!—else," added he, setting his teeth and casting a lurid glance towards a group a little to the left of us, "some I wot o' wadna haud their head sae heegh the day." "Until ye can look into baith the hame and the heart o' ye're neebours, John, it's totally impossible for you to ken either their reward or their punishment. Pride'll gar a body to carry their head, whiles, heegh aneugh, when a' within is canker and despair—a beginning of the wrath to come."—"That's no what he said—he tell't us, as plain as my finger neb, that gude actions met their sure reward, even—" "But, John," interrupted Simon, "you make a strange mistake; you seem to confuse the ideas of money and of happiness, as if riches were *happiness itself*, and that there can be no reward to the good but money."—"Atweel, Mr. Simon, wi' your leave, I ne'er saw muckle happiness wanting it! Whan a man's sitting in frost and snaw, cowering o'er a fire o' wat sticks—wi' twa or three nakit hungered bairnies greetin' at his lug, and a wife, maybe no the sweetest at the best, girning, flyin', and murmurin' for the meat he has na to gie—my word on't sirs," said the old man as his lips quivered at the home-scene he had drawn, "it's little wonder if he thinks money and happiness gay near freends." "Still even then," replied the old man, with a peculiarly solemn and steady gaze at his neighbour's face, "even then, all happiness is not gone from that man, if he can lift up his hands and his eyes to his God, and cry, 'Thou knowest, O Friend of the friendless, that I have not brought this upon myself by forgettin' thy statutes, or breakin' thy commandments!'"

The angry glance of John's eye told too plainly that this had not been his case, and some furious words seemed ready to burst out, when a careless jovial-looking old fellow, who had sat rather restless during the argument, broke in with "Come, come, sirs, what's the use o' argufeing and getting het about it? Just haud ye're tongues ilk ane o' ye — and I'll tell ye a story — it's as true as death, for jist the word o' 't happened to mysel', and ye'll see I was rewarded for a gude action, and yet I got nae money. Gude forgie me for saying ony action o' my ain was gude, but ony way I did my best." "Weel, weel, let's hear aboot it, Rab," cried several voices — all glad as it appeared to escape an angry debate. Rob blew his nose and cleared his throat. "Ye'll a' hae mind o' the Year o' the Typhus Fèver?" A smothered groan broke from the whole group. "Aye — we hae o'er gude reason," and more than one eye glanced hastily over the green mounds near which we sat. "Aweel, it was the year afore that again, that Sir William roupit some rye-grass parks afore he gaed awa abroad wi' his leddy; and our gudewife and me, we had consultit thegither aboot the buying ane or twa, and we thoct it wad be an unco gude plan, if they gaed cheap, which fowk thoct they wad, by Sir William being sae sair hurried to leave hame. Weel, I sat aff to the roup, and a bonny simmer's night it was, trudging awa wi' my shoon in my hand, and just nae mair time nor wad sair me to get there. When I got to the tap o' the Bowden brae, and was just gaun to turn aff the heegh road through the fields, I lookit aboot, and there, awa maist half a mile down the road, does I see a young leddy that I dinna doot ye'll a' mind riding hereabouts." "On a brown powney, and her lane," said some of them. "Aye, maistly her lane, but gae aften, specially in the evenings, she had a young gentleman wi' her. It was na her brown powney, it was a gray ane she had that night, and when I got sight o' her, she was on the ground a' her length; the ill-set beast had coosten her; she lay a wee minute, stunned like, and then rose. The beast stood stock still as lang as she was on the ground, but when'er she offered to put her fit into the stirrup, sirs, ye wad hae thoct the vera auld clootie had gotten in till't; it kickit, and flang, and flew roun' and roun', and threw up its head and syne its tail, till I wondered in mysel' hoo ony woman, let alane a bit delicate wee leddy, had courage or strength to keep a grip o' the reins; she coaxed and she clappit it, and she gathered han'fu's o' grass and gied it to eat; it ate the grass, and up wi' its heels again as ill as ever. I stood a gae wee and lookit at her, till the roup, the roup, cam o'er my mind, and I loupit the dyke and lost sight o' her."

I wish any painter could have caught the expression of Simon's large dark eye, as it gleamed from under the furze-like pent-house of his huge eyebrow, at this part of poor Robin's narrative. On him, however, it was lost; he was busy taking a snuff, and, handing the box, he quietly resumed. — "I had nae gane far whan the thoughts o' that puir young lassy cam o'er my heart sae heavy and sae queer. I minded how aften I had lookit at the pale pale face, and the meek eye, and I thought I heard the sweet voice, like the wind sughing through a summer tree, that answered me when I bad her a gude day or gude e'en: and it just cam doon on my heart, 'God will never bless my bairns if I leave that young creature to meet her death wi' no a leevin near her.' So I turned back, and when I cam in sight o' her again, she was sitting on the bit bank by the road side, the reins in the ae han', and her head leanin' on theither. The beast was feeding quietly aff the tap o' the dyke. I ran as hard as ever I could doon the brae, and my heart was knock, knocking, as it wad hae been through my very side. I kent I wad be ewer late for the roup, but something I couldna gainsay drave me on. When I cam up to her, she rase, and thankit me vera sweet for coming till her, and said that when I gaed out o' sight her heart sickened, for the night was faing fast, and she was five

miles frae hame, and no a house nearer than twa mile. I said, 'She suldna ride her lane sae often.' She said, 'She was in very ill health, was aye better when she could get her bit ride, — her father couldna afford a manservant to ride wi' her, and nae ill had e'er happened to her afore.' I said, 'There was whiles a handsome young gentleman rade wi' her; where was he the night?' If ye had but seen the reddening blush, by a' the world like the glint o' the setting sun on a wee white cloud, that swammed o'er her pale cheek! She said, 'He was a man in business, and it was a rare time when he could get away from it.' A' this time I was trying to tame the savage ill-set deevil o' a powney, but sic a wratch I ne'er saw. Neither by fair means nor foul could I gar't stand to let either me or the ledgy into the saddle, — it kickit wi' its heels, and snappit wi' its teeth like a vera dog, and took the bit out o' my gude new jacket; — at last I saw three o' our lads coming down o'er the Hinging Shaw, and I beckoned on them, and it was as muckle as we four could man to tame it aneuch to let her into the saddle. Afore I gied her the reins, I axed her if she wasna feared to mount a beast it took four men to master? She smiled, and said, 'No, she wad mind her hand better now that she knew it had a trick.' She thankit us a' vera muckle, and said to me that she hopit a day wad come when she wad hae an opportunity of requiting my kindness to her that day! I gied her the reins, and aff the powney flew like an arrow frae the bow, — it didna try to fling her as lang as we saw it, and she sat it like a very queen. Hech, sirs! mony a weary day her parting words rang in my lugs! After a', the gentles hae a real sweet way wi' them! it's just something gars a body forget themselves, — for as sure's death, the hail time I was wi' her I ne'er ance thought o' the roup, but as soon as I lost sight o' her it cam o'er me wi' a burnin' stang, and mair than a', the thoughts o' what our Jean would say, for ye ken our Jean's gae and sharp when she's vexed, puir body."

The assenting laugh that burst from most of the party, gave evidence that this characteristic of Robin's helpmate was no secret. He joined in it with the air of a man who tries to make his petticoat thralldom sit as easy as he can, and went on, "I kent fu' weel I was o'er late, but I set off rinnin' like an auld fule." "Twas na the only thing ye had dune like an auld fule that night, Rabby," cried John, with a sarcastic grin. Rab went on without noticing the interruption. "I tried to think to mysel' that maybe something might ha' made it fa' a wee late, and I wad be in time yet, but, wae's me, it wasna to be sae. I met the folk coming frae the roup a mile on this side o' the roupin grund, and they tell me that the parks had gane off just awfu' cheap, and wad be a mine o' siller to them that got them if they got ony thing o' a gude tid. Aweel, aweel, what was I to say to Jean? Howsomever, to mak' a lang tale short, hame I gaed, and sic a flyting as she flate ye ne'er heard, — she ca'd me a' the auld doited donnered idiots, auld stupit deevils, e'er was. I ne'er bowed my e'e that night, what wi' Jean's flyting and thinking o' the ledgy, and aye it cam through my mind that maybe she wad do as muckle for us yet as wad gar us forget the rye-grass parks; but when I said that to Jean, — keep me! for it was waur and waur! 'Her do for ye indeed,' quo' she, 'ye ne'er-do-weel auld haiverel, — a waly tale in troth! My certie, it's nane o' ye'r riding madams that canna pay a flunkie to gang at their ain tail, that'll gie muckle o' the penny efter to an auld senseless brute that neglects his ain business to hunt their camstary powneys!' Aweel, time gaed on and on, — I ne'er heard, and what seemed stranger still, I ne'er saw mair o' my bonny ledgy. Mony, mony was the time when I heard a horse's foot, my heart has gien sic a loup, and when I lifted my head frae my wark it has garred my e'en believe they saw her, whiles I could na but smile to mysel' afterhin at the things I took for her.

"The winter cam', and oh, it was a dour and a dismal ane to us. We war sair sair pinched, and must ha' been roupit had Sir William no been mair than merciful. Mony was the sair biting jeer Jean gied me about the leddy and the rye-grass parks. I had just to bide them, for what could I say? We hopit that the summer wad bring better times, but summer brought that awfu' fever." Robin paused, took off his hat and wiped his brow, as if the very recollection of this season of trial unmanned him. "Nine of us lay in it at one time; not a soul in our house escaped the infection. I took it amang the first, and I had asked a neebour to send up a doctor as he passed through the town wi' his carts. When he cam, I was surprised to see it was the same young man that used to ride wi' the leddy; Oh, God bless him! for he was a friend indeed in our sairest need, when nae other could or would help us; for the few that escaped infection dreaded it too much to come near them that had it, and ye ken we are far frae neebours any way. It was a fearfu' time. We war in want o' every thing. We never had been sae puir.

"The fever took Jean's head, and often i' the night her bitter cries for me that couldna steer to help her, and the moaning and greeting o' the wee miserable bairnies, joined to my ain sufferings, maist turned my head too. Twice every day did that blessed man come seven miles to see us; he didna come like a doctor, he cam' like an angel, for he aye brought wine and things to do us gude, and aye left us better and mair comfortable than he fand us. He wud tak aff his coat and work amang us, helping ane and o' that could neither help themsels' nor them dearer nor their heart's blude, and wud do things ye wadna believe the like o' him wad think o'.

"I was the first that was able to crawl out o' the bed to try to do a little for the other eight. Ae day I was helping the doctor to put ane o' the bairns into a warm bath, and the bairn being loth to stay in the water, made a grabble at his breast and tore open his waistcoat; wi' that out fell a black ribbon and a gold thing like an oval half-crown piece hanging at it, and gold letters marked on't,—it hung just before my e'en, and as he moved, it turned the other side, and what did I see? A picture o' my ain leddy. —Oh, sirs, it was sae wee, and sae beautifu', and sae like her, though that I had ne'er seen her but wi' a hat, and it had nae hat, but buckles o' dark hair hinging a' roun' the pale pale face. I clean forgat what I was doing — my e'en were glewed on't — the sweet half-parted lips seemed just saying, 'A day will come when I shall have it in my power to requite your kindness.' I maist garred mysel' believe I heard the words ance mair! I could hae glowred at it for ever, but whan the doctor saw whar' my e'en war fixed, he took his han', wat as it was, and pushing the picture into his bosom, he buttoned up his waistcoat. I felt reproved and vexed; fain wad I ha' axed aboot her, but something tied my tongue, and I couldna even look in his face. By his care and kindness, wi' a blessing from God who is aboon a', every ane o' our fowk recovered, and ae day when he had seen us a' a-fit, he said to me, that he didna think he wad need to visit us again, bade God bless us, and turned to mount his horse. Mony, mony was the sad consultation puir Jean and me had had aboot how we ever war to pay him, and mony a time she had said that if she had a hunder pound she wad gie it till him, 'and think it o'er little,' and that was muckle frae our Jean, for she likes the siller weel. I gaed after him to the door, and my heart was fou fou, 'Oh, doctor, doctor,' quo' I, 'ye hae the deepest heart's blessing o' me and mine, and that's a' we ha' to gie ye the now; ye ha' seen o'er weel we're puir, but maybe better days may come, and we wull rather want than ye suld want your due.' I just think I see him yet, stan'in' sae heegh and sae handsome, the reins in ae han', and his fingers in the horse's mane, the ither held out to me. 'Robert,' says he, 'you are nothing whatever in my debt; for my attendance on you and on your family, I never will

accept of one farthing; so keep your mind easy.' I lookit at him quite stupid-like. 'Sir!' quo' I, and I had na the power to say anither word; he lookit very mild at me. 'Robert,' says he, 'I saw your eyes fixed upon a picture your little son one day snatched out of my breast. Did you know it?' 'Yes, sir,' quo' I, 'I kent it weel, she is a dear and lovely leddy.' He answered me in a laigh voice, 'She *was* all that, Robert; *now* she is an angel in heaven, and it is in compliance with her dying request, that I have taken the first opportunity I ever had of *requiting your kindness to her that day*.' He sprang on his horse as he spak the last words, and was out o' sight in a moment."

Poor Robert paused; and I can assure you, the half-formed tear he brushed from his weather-worn cheek, was reflected in the eyes of at least one of his hearers. His simple narrative called forth the warmest applause, and after remarking that there was no one who might not observe similar proofs of the doctrine in their own experience, the old man, John's antagonist in argument, said that he recollected a circumstance, striking enough, in the same point of view, and in which he had borne a part.

RETRIBUTION.

THE old man's narrative was as follows:—"Some time before I left Linton to settle here, I was asked by some charitable folks in the town to choose a good milk cow for a puir widow woman. The puir creature's only support for hersel and an orphan oe, had been a wee bit Highland cow, and it brak its leg and dee't; so them that got their milk frae her, hearing of her sair misfortune, and knowing her to be a worthy industrious body, made a subscription for her through the town, and gathered somewhere about 13*l*. for to buy her a new cow; so, as I felt ye, I was asked to gang wi' ane Willy M'Nab to choose the cow. Willy was an unco douce man, and unco gude wi' his tale. The ne'er was a mornin' o' summer or winter that he did na mak' the exerceese, and scriegh the prayers and psalms that loud, ye might hae heard them a mile down the wind. Far be it frae me, sirs, to make a joke o' ony sic thing—but really I whiles thought to mysel' it was awsome to hear't, when I kent su' weel there was not that within which suld sanctify the means, and without which they are 'an abomination unto the Lord,' and that as sune as the scriegh was bye, Willy wad pit his religion up on the shelf wi' the buke, and gang out as greedy as a gled, on world's gear, and ne'er fash his thumb about 'justice, judgment, and the weightier matters of the law.' Natheless, he was an elder in the seceder kirk, and what wi' that, and his sleekit manner, they war mony that thought him a perfect Nathaniel. Weel, him and me, we set aff to choose a cow frae among the stock o' a man that was selling off. We saw twa,—the tane a very heavy Ayrshire cow, just as grand a milk beast as ye could clap an e'e upon,—and the ither a wee sma'-baned Highland beastie, no that ill for milk neither, but to my mind no worthy the tae half o' the muckle ane, tho' that they asked 8*l*. for her, and only 13*l*. for the ither;—so we fell to the disputing whilk o' the twa we suld buy for the widow. I was for the big ane, and he was for the wee ane, and he argued sae hetly about how muckle fitter it was for a puir body's cow, than a great muckle brute like that—'t wad eat sae muckle less fodder; and he wad no hear to me, when I said, 'muckle meat, muckle milk,' Willy, I think that muckle cow cheap at the money, and that's what I'll no say o' the ither. At last we agreed to refer the thing to them that sent us, and we set to meet, like the neist day, and lay it afore them. I gaed my ways hame, and I thought he did the same, but what think ye! the auld fox awa

straight to the town, got thegither some twa or three o' them that had subscribed the money, and telled them that I wanted to buy a great muckle useless brute, wad eat the woman out o' house and hame, and no gie the half o' the milk o' the wee dainty bit beast I had just ta'en an ill will to, for nae reason whatsoever he could see, without that I wanted it for mysel', for indeed it was a cow quite past the ordinary! Of course he was ordered to buy the wee cow, and without e'er letting his feet cool in his shoon, back he gangs, buys baith the cows, and aff wi' them. He let it be dusk e'er he cam near hame, and he left the muckle cow in his ain byre, and took hame the widow's till her.

"Nae doubt he was a happy man in his ain conceit that night, when the cow was milket, and for a' that she had walket, gied the outside drap o' what the fowk had upheld her for. But his joy, like maist joys o' the ungodly, was na ordeened to last very lang, for the neist morning whan he gaed in to fodder the cattle, the first sight he got was his grand new cow lying dead. How it happened nane could tell, but there she lay, as dead and as stiff as a door nail. Willy's rage knew nae bounds, and it was the mair fierce and imbittered, that he felt himself and his worldly wisdom punished and derided by that God whose eyes are over all his creatures, and whose judgments he daily dared by his hypocrisy. His auld son had foddered the kye the night afore, so a' the rage fell on him, as if he alane had caused the death o' the cow—he was but a dour ill-nurtured lad at the best, and returned his father rage for rage; at last the father went frae words to blows, and the son returned them too. I'll ne'er forget the awesome sight, it made the very blude cruddle at my heart, as I was gaun wi' my cart down the other side o' the Linton burn, fornent their farm-steading, o' Willy and his son tearing and wrastlin' like twa baited dogs, and the puir meeserable woman, the wife o' the ane, and the mither o' the ither, struggling to separate them. Their ain servants at last took them aff ither, but no before they had drawn ane anither's blude, and that blude, I may say, never dried, for they ne'er had a peaceable or a pleasant moment after. They war joined in the lease o' the farm, and they drew that contrair to ane anither after the story o' the cow, that every thing gaed wrang, and they hasted to their ruin as if an unseen enemy pursued. The son took to drinking, and made a vile marriage wi' a little-worth hizzy, and every shilling he could procure by the sale of stock or crop was spent in the maist beastly wickedness. Ae night when he had drunken himsel' mad, the fowk o' the house where he was, lockit him into a room three stairs up, and left him a' night; the puir wratch, after beetling and dinging in vain at the door to get out, tried the window wi' better success, and was ta'en up aff the pavement below, wi' a broken leg and a broken back; he lingered for five months in an awfu' state o' agony; they said the vera feet and legs war mouldered aff him before he dee'd, and whan he did dee, he left his parents childless, and his children beggars. The auld man was sune puttin' out o' the farm, and the last time I was at the Linton, he was working day's wark whar he could get it, a poor, decrepit, drunksome, auld sinner, but still, as if no weary o' offending the Almighty, scrieghing at the psalms night and mornin'."

"Now," said the persevering John, as soon as the speaker had ceased, "will you answer me this ae thing, Arthur; can you tell me what connexion there was—for I can see nane—atween the man cheating the widow of a gude cow, and his son breaking his back in a drunken frolic? I canna just say," pursued he, in the most triumphant tone, "but that I prefer the doctrine o' Solomon to yours, when he says, 'The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God; no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them;' and also St. Paul, 'If in this world only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.' It's but a

poor mean doctrine to uphau'd, that the gude and the evil are requited in this perishing life." "As to the first part of your speech, John," replied Arthur, "I can see nae connexion atween the twa things, save this, that the same evil heart of unbelief that led Willy M'Nab daily to insult his Maker with a feigned worship, and cheat the defenceless widow, also led him to give so defective an education to his son, as produced the evil life so wretchedly terminated; for there is no one vice in parents, which so certainly and inevitably strikes at the root of every virtue in their children, as that of hypocrisy. Far, far be it frae me to assert, that temporal rewards and punishments invariably follow the good and bad in this world, for that were to lower and degrade the government o' the Eternal; yet from the very frame and constitution o' things in this world, it must and does very frequently happen so. Before you quoted thae twa texts, John, you, like many other quoters from Scripture, would have done well to recollect how many others are given by the Holy Spirit to balance and correct the hasty judgment of man. Read for instance the whole of the 37th Psalm. Will you tell us that there is 'meanness,' or 'abounding iniquity,' in the doctrine it uphau'ds? Open any page in the Bible, and you will find promises to the same effect. 'If any man do the will of my Father, lo, my Father and I will come down and abide with him.' Could ever the wicked man or the hypocrite boast a reward like this, even when their corn and wine did most abound?"

"Your sentiments are most just, Arthur," said Simon, "and could John remember what too many forget, that money is not in *itself* happiness, and that many who maintain external decency, and are to the eye of man *good*, never in their lives did one single action from the genuine and unmingled love of God, and therefore cannot lay claim to the promises given to those who regulate their whole lives by that alone; I suspect he would on these considerations find our argument less absurd than he is fain to prove it. There would be meanness indeed, in maintaining that God invariably rewards his faithful servants with the poor perishing loaves and fishes of earthly prosperity. No; 'the chosen of the Lord are tried as in a furnace.' How often do we see their best endeavours for the things of this world turned to naught — their industry of no avail, and as it were a blighting wind pursue every little leaf of earthly joy as it ventures to expand. Yet if we make ourselves acquainted with such cases, and look beyond the surface, we shall find that 'out of evil cometh good to them that love the Lord,' and that they have at last reason to cry out, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' These words were repeated to me, not many weeks ago, by one who had been taught to feel all their force and meaning; and if I had time," pursued he, taking out his watch, "I would like to tell you the circumstances of his life, they are so like a commentary on what we have been saying."

THE BROTHERS.

SIMON thus commenced his relation:—"James Dalton was a school-fellow of my own, and even as a boy, he possessed a spirit of quiet industry that followed him through life. He pursued his father's calling, that of a market gardener. He married early, and had three children, two boys and a girl; when this, their youngest joy, was about two years old, it was suddenly cut off. The blow fell cold and heavy on their hearts, for they were both most affectionate in disposition. But they murmured not. They strove, through the glass of faith, to see their pure and lovely blossom blooming in those fields where comes no blight, where no worm unseen can prey. After a time a widowed sister of his wife's died, leaving an orphan boy, and a girl about the age of their lost one. Her they took to

their home and their hearts, where she became an object of the fondest love, particularly to her cousins, Walter and James. In the disposition of these two boys there was the most marked difference; both were amiable, but Walter was a silent, pensive boy, that loved to be alone, — who, to the noisy and often quarrelsome sports of the village green, preferred to sit in a corner with a book — or, holding little Jeanie's hand, to wander into the wood with her — to gather her lapfulls of wild flowers or fruit — to show her the earliest birds' nests — or to take her, in frosty days, to where the waterfall had formed fantastic bowers of glittering crystal, which, when the sun shone, surpassed in beauty all a diadem could purchase, — then returning home, if his mother was engaged, he would put the little orphan to bed, with all the care and tenderness of a nurse, — kneeling by her, hear her say the little simple heart-born prayer of infancy, that, doubtless, reaches the ear of Omnipotence with the same acceptance as the orison of the highest archangel, — then seated by her bedside, he would silently wait till her innocent eyes were closed in sleep.

"No less was this little fairy beloved by James, — the thoughtless, noisy, playful James. All the time he could spare from that village green, of which he was at once the pride and the terror, he would spend in riotous play with Jeanie, who always received him with shouts of rapture, though it seldom happened that the frolic ended without a hearty fit of roaring on her part, from some quarrel between them, or some heedless roughness of the harum-scarum boy.

"Walter was by no means distinguished for ability, yet he never was found defective in his lesson. Whatever he did was marked with the quiet good sense and considerateness that formed the ground-work of his character; while James, with twice his talent, seldom two days successively escaped punishment, and by whom the lesson and the sorely-resented whipping, were alike forgotten before the joyous influence of the first athletic sport or act of daring that suggested itself to his buoyant mind.

"Thus they grew to manhood, and the choice of a business for life became a source of anxiety to themselves and their parents. James at once declared that he would be a soldier, and vociferated loudly about the glories of a soldier's life. Jeanie's eyes filled with tears, and joining her voice to his mother's prohibition of this scheme, she murmured out, 'Oh, James, do not be a soldier.' Then turning her blushing face to Walter, she said in the most thrilling tone of affection, 'And will you too be a soldier, Walter, and leave us all alone?' 'No,' said Walter; 'I am resolved to be what my fathers have been before me; I will be a gardener.' His mother laid her hand on his fair head, and blest him aloud in her fulness of heart. His father said with the deepest solemnity, 'The blessing of God and thy father go with thee, my boy. Wo unto him who enters into life destitute of or defying both.' James stood irresolute — now looking at Jeanie — now at his parents and his brother — his colour flashing to and from his youthful face; at last he rushed into his mother's arms, — 'Bless me too, mother; father, bless me too; I will not leave you; I will try to settle.' The parents kissed and blessed the affectionate boy, and it was agreed that they should both remain with their father, and do the best they could.

"At night when the boys were left alone on their humble couch, Walter confided to James a scheme that had long occupied his own mind. A little way beyond their father's garden there was about four acres of bog, covered with hazel and alder bushes, and with every corner of which they were well acquainted, as in the drought of summer it was the favourite resort of idle boys. Walter had discovered that it was not naturally boggy, but merely rendered so by a spring which, rising in an old quarry in the hill behind, had been set loose by the operations there, and allowed gradually to spread over the level ground below — that it could be drained very easily,

and when grubbed and cleared, would be as if intended by nature for a garden—'But, Walter,' said James, 'who will give us the bog? I don't know who it belongs to.' 'It belongs to Sir Michael,' said Walter, 'and, if my father approves the plan, I think we'll go to Sir Michael and ask him to give us a lease of it on easy terms, upon condition we make it into a garden.' James was so filled with delight, so many half-defined pictures of future wealth and happiness floated through his brain, that he could not sleep; and by day-break he had his father hoisted away to the bog. He gave a shout that made the hills ring, when his father pronounced that he considered Walter's plan a good one—advised them to lose no time in asking a lease from the laird, and promised them all the assistance he himself could afford to give them. James thought every moment lost till they were on the way; dressed in their Sunday suits, they were soon ready to depart—and what human heart could blame the glance of pride that passed between the parents as they looked after their two beautiful boys; full of life and joy, setting out on this their first step on the ocean of life? The benevolent Sir Michael received them, and listened to their request with the greatest kindness. 'Is it a bit of ground lying near the public road, between the Chapelrood and Bogside farms that ye mean, my boys?' 'Yes, sir,' said Walter, 'the same—and if you will have the goodness to give us a lease of it on moderate terms—'

"Indeed I do n't know what terms would make so poor a mailen worth your care; it seems to me impossible you can ever make a garden of it.' 'Oh, no,' said James, 'it would be much easier than you think.' 'Well, well,' said Sir Michael, with a good-natured smile, 'try it, boys—try it—for the first five years you shall pay no rent, for the next five you shall pay five shillings per acre, and for the third five, ten shillings. After that, if I do not live so long, my heirs and you must settle about the rent of this, your garden to be.' The delighted boys thanked him with all their little stock of good manners, and were turning away; when Walter said, 'I believe, sir, there should be some writing about a lease?' 'Indeed,' said Sir Michael, laughing, 'I think there is no great risk any one will disturb you in the lease of Arncliffe; however, I shall speak to my baron baillie, and he will attend to the business, and make it quite secure to you.'

"What two happy spirits were these on their way home! How many blissful visions, which youth alone can know, floated before their unsullied souls! Their words, at least Walter's, were few. 'How glad Jeanie will be,' said James: 'Yes,' said Walter, 'Jeanie will be glad,' and he sighed deeply, for he felt that what gladdened not Jeanie, would have no joy for him. The affection of boyhood had, as he grew to be a man, deepened into passion, which seemed part and portion of his existence—a passion so deep and holy, that to his pensive and romantic young mind, it seemed as if it would have lost something of its sanctity by being breathed, even to a brother's ear. The two youths still continued to all appearance what they had ever been to their cousin—all Jeanie's little joys, hopes, and griefs, were confided to Walter. She had no thought concealed from him, and they were often told with the express request, 'not to tell James.' With James she was more reserved. Little snappish encounters of the tongue had now succeeded to the petty quarrels and boisterous games of childhood. James seemed to delight in teasing her, and was so perpetually playing tricks upon her, which she was nothing loth to requite, that their life was a series of little quarrels and reconcilements. Woman's heart is a strange and wayward thing; who can wonder if the young and inexperienced Walter read it not aright?

"For the next six months, every hour from daylight to darkness was devoted to the task of draining and clearing the bog, and their progress exceeded even James's expectation. With the brushwood grubbed out,

they formed a strong fence all round, which protected the young hedge they had planted. In draining and levelling the ground, they dug out as much freestone as built a neat little cottage at the end of the garden, where it joined the public road. The water from the old quarry was now forced to lend both beauty and fertility to the ground it formerly destroyed. And when spring again enamelled the neighbouring fields, those who had sneered at what they called 'the idiot wark of draining the bog,' saw with astonishment its level surface glowing like an emerald, with the lovely green of the young strawberry beds with which, by their father's advice, they had planted a great part of its extent, and which were checkered with rows of currant and gooseberry bushes, and fruit trees, intended to form the future wealth of the garden. In the centre they had left one tree of tolerable size, and driving stakes round it, they formed the frame work of an arbour. Walter planted roses and honeysuckles, but James planted what more resembled his own character, the rapid growing and luxuriant hop; here a rustic seat and table were placed for her whose smiles gave brightness and joy to all their toils, and here the happy trio often sat and laughed away the hours that intermitted or succeeded their labour.

"Their crop, and its profits, surpassed their most sanguine expectations, and earth rarely exhibits a scene of such unruffled happiness, as did this humble group, especially at those sweet hours of evening, when, led by their father's deep-toned solemn voice, they offered up their humble heartfelt mood of gratitude to their Father in heaven, for all they had, and all they hoped for in time and eternity.

"It was in the second year of the garden, that on a hot summer day, Walter was seated at the back of Jeanie's bower, putting a new handle to his spade, when he heard James and Jeanie come into it. 'He is not here,' said James, in a disappointed tone, 'let's seek him up the garden.' 'Rather sit down and talk a while, James.' 'Yea, Jeanie, if you wish it; but, Jeanie, happy as I am, I think I shall be doubly so when Walter knows, — dear Walter, how he used to grieve when you chid at me, and seemed as if you did not like me! Oh! Jeanie, why did you so often vex me; why hide so well what now is told?' 'What's told?' said she, with a giggling laugh. 'That you love me, Jeanie, that you will be mine, my own, my dearest, my only love;' and as he spoke he caught her to his bosom.

"Walter saw, and heard, and felt, as if a levin bolt had pierced his brain; he threw from him the tool in his hand; he dashed down the garden, and springing over the fence into the wood, rushed forward, as if by rapidity of motion he could escape the pangs of the vulture passions that had seized his heart. At last, exhausted with his own violence, he sunk down on the ground, he covered his face with his hands, and the sun was far below the hills ere he moved from that attitude. What were the thoughts, the feelings, that had gushed through his heart during these hours, let those guess who have suffered like him, — to describe them to those who have not, is to speak of colours to the blind.

"One who had looked on his young face in the morning and in the evening of that day, might well have deemed that he had passed from youth to old age in its course: but his part was taken, the whirlpool of passion raged no more; he had cast himself on his God, and his God forsook him not. Strong in generous purpose, he arose, and took the way home; he was near the edge of the wood when he met James. 'Walter! oh, Walter, where have you been? How long my father and I have sought you, and my mother and Jeanie ——' 'I have been very sick,' said Walter, hastily, as if fearful of what would follow that name. 'Sick? and why did you remain in the wood? and now when I see you in the moonlight, you are quite pale and haggard-like, and your voice is so strange and hollow. Oh, Walter, where have you been? What has happened to you?' 'I

tell you,' said Walter with something like irritation, 'I have been ill, ~~and~~ ill, but,' he added in a milder tone, 'I daresay a night's rest will put me all to rights again—I would rather not speak now.' James walked on in dissatisfied silence, frequently stealing a look of wonder at his brother—but such was the habitual respect with which Walter's reserve of manner inspired the more volatile James, that he dared not renew his questions even on entering the house. Walter merely repeated to his parents what he had told James, and immediately went up to his bed, which, for the first time in his life, he wished he had been to occupy alone.

"Fain would the happy James have poured the story of his own bliss into a brother's ear; but he saw Walter was ill at ease, and without a suspicion of the cause, an instinctive feeling that he was also unhappy kept him silent, and dashed with sorrow these first hours of his new-born bliss.

"Wearily passed the hours of night to Walter. There was a fire in his brain—and he found dimness and confusion assail his mind at intervals—he thought this was his own fault—he prayed—he struggled; but the more he struggled, the more intense became his agony, and ere the noon of the following day he was raving in all the frantic violence of a fever. In his delirium he often used such heart-rending expressions of tenderness for Jeanie, mingled with those of broken-hearted grief, that it led his poor mother to suspect how things stood, and almost to guess at the true cause of his mysterious absence and illness; but James, wrapt in utter unconsciousness of his brother's real feelings, looked on these merely as the ravings of fever. Weeks wore on without any change for the better; his mother's cheek was blanched with watching and anxiety, and Jeanie's slender figure flitted mournfully through the darkened apartment, heedless even of her beloved James, and her own brightly opening prospects, so suddenly—so strangely clouded. At length one day he awoke from a quiet sleep, and fixed his eyes on Jeanie's face, who, her hands crossed upon her breast, stood gazing on his altered countenance—he looked at her long and steadily, as if trying to gather together the long-scattered ideas, then turned away his head and burst into tears—he wept like a child, and, bending over him, his mother wept too; imploring God, who dealt the wound, would send healing to this her stricken deer. From this time he slowly recovered, and the meek and silent sorrow of his soul was ascribed by those about him to bodily feeling. His mother alone saw where his ailment lay, and gladly did he agree to her proposal of trying change of air by going to his uncle's house in the north. He longed for the hour when he might be emancipated from the trial of living in the same house with Jeanie, and being the constant object of her cares. 'Oh, that she had loved me less, since she could not love me more,' he muttered as he turned away his face to avoid her inquiring glance. The unconscious James often inflicted torture, while trying, in his own opinion, to rouse and interest his brother, by dwelling on all his own past fears and future hopes, and lamenting that he was not to be present at their marriage. At such times poor Walter's heart, crushed and despairing, almost gave way before the trial—and gliding away to his humble apartment, he would pour out all the bitterness of his soul to that Being who knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust.

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(A considerable portion of the MS. is here obliterated, apparently by damp.)

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"Far from every object of his affection, Walter had now worn away two dreary years. The bitterness of disappointed love and hope had gradually melted into settled sadness. He was resigned, but not cheerful; he would not have deprived his brother of Jeanie if he could; yet, though his pensive thoughts dwelt ceaselessly on the home of those he loved, to that home he dreaded to return. Thither, however, he did return, on hearing that his

much-loved mother was thought dying. It was at her bedside he first encountered Jeanie, and as he gazed on the death-changed face of his mother he almost forgot that the being who had so blest and so clouded his early day, was standing with his hand clasped in her own. His mother turned her languid eyes upon him — for a moment they were lighted up with the bright, unquenchable spirit of a mother's love, and she murmured out her dying blessing on her favourite child — 'Walter, my gentle Walter, when I am gone, do not forsake your father — abide with him, — and remember that the Almighty chooseth better for us than we could choose for ourselves —'

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"And as he thus, for the second time in one year, traversed the village burying-ground, to deposit there the mortal remains of the only beings for whom he wished to live, he felt how gladly he too would have laid himself down within its sacred enclosure,

"Where the weary pilgrim rests
From all the griefs he bore."

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"Had Walter been permitted to enjoy all his father had left him, he would have been rich for his station in life. But after a series of legal vexations, he was doomed to see, not merely the whole of his father's hard-won property pass away from him, but to pay a sum much beyond all he possessed, in the form of expenses to those who had originally fomented the dispute. Nothing remained to him but the share of the Arncliffe garden, which James had considerably enlarged. James and Jeanie entreated he would come and live with them — and there was a little fairy — the image, as it was the very age at which Walter but too well remembered its mother brought a helpless orphan to his father's home — it climbed upon his knees, and nestling in his bosom, repeated, 'Come to us, Atta — come to us, Atta.' Walter bent over it to hide a tear that would not be forbidden; — he became an inmate of his brother's house — that very cottage, that, in the days of other years and feelings, he had toiled to make a pattern of rural beauty — and this little child became to him a well-spring of delight; wherever he went, it toddled after him, or nestled in his arms, patiently enduring sun and rain, cold or hunger, so as he was there. Who has not felt the almost magic power of childhood to win the heart from cold and cheerless gloom, casting a ray of its own brightness athwart the chill and joyless void of advancing life? A spring of sympathy thus opened in his heart; Walter became happier than he thought he ever could have been again.

"One day while he was at work in the garden, a gentleman on horseback paused and looked over the hedge very inquisitively — then addressing him, asked if this garden and cottage were not on the grounds of Sir Michael — ? 'Yes, sir.' 'And pray,' rejoined the inquirer, 'what rent do you pay?' Walter gazed at the stranger, and answered coldly, that they had a lease from the late Sir Michael on condition of draining, &c. The stranger made no reply, but turning his horse, rode slowly back, as if measuring the extent of the garden, looked very particularly at the cottage, and then rode briskly away. This was another Sir Michael who had arisen, and who knew not Walter and his brother. Unlike the former, he valued no joy save that of accumulation. He had that day been on a tour through his wide-spread lands, grudging that he could not raise the rent of every waving field or well-peopled pasture that he saw, inwardly declaring, that the very look of such farms showed the rents were too low. When his basilisk eyes lighted on the lovely spot into which his father's benevolence

had enabled the Daltons to convert a useless wilderness of brambles and brushwood, he rode directly to his baron bailie, and inquired what rent they paid. 'None, sir.' 'None! — no rent!' 'No, sir; at least a mere nominal one. Your father gave these lads possession of a piece of useless bog ground for fifteen years, on condition they should convert it into a garden, in which they have succeeded; they are most industrious —' 'Yes, yes, one of my father's Quixotisms — and how comes it I never saw the papers?' 'Why, I really believe — I rather think — indeed I am certain — there never were any papers made out about it. I remember about seven years ago, passing that way, I observed the men, then mere boys, at work, and asked by whose authority — they said by your late father's. I inquired at your late father, and he replied — 'Yes, yes, I told them to take it — a vile eyesore well out of the way,' I remember he said, and added, 'they are to have it at a nominal rent for fifteen years, and then to pay a reasonable rent — make out something like a lease to that effect — or, stay till I see how they go on — if they are industrious they deserve encouragement. There never was more said, and the thing fell quite aside.' 'Just so; quite like my father's indolence. Make out immediately an order for these fellows to pay 20*l.* per annum of house and garden rent, or quit at Martinmas.' 'Really, Sir Michael —' 'Really, — Mr. baron bailie, I desire none of your altercations; I have had rather too much of that of late — obey my orders promptly.' He dashed out of the room as he spoke. When eternity opens, with what feelings will he look back on that moment? — of what value will 20*l.* appear then? — what but the delusion of the father of lies could make it appear of value at any time to the possessor of 35,000*l.* per annum? Yet to procure it he sent dismay and desolation through a whole family! When they found that there was no remedy — that the total want of legal evidence left them entirely at the landlord's mercy, the two brothers were very differently affected — James stormed and raved — vowed every sort of vengeance on the unfeeling Sir Michael — fretted at Jeanie's tears, and talked the most incoherent nonsense. Walter, grieved but calm, looked on in silence, till James was somewhat exhausted with his own violence. 'Are these the lessons you learned from your father and mother, James, of submission to the will of God; or is it the example you wish your own children to follow?' 'There is some difference,' passionately rejoined James, 'between submitting to the will of God, and to the will of a hard-hearted scoundrel like Sir Michael.' 'Then you suppose that Sir Michael acts independent of the will of God?' 'I don't understand you, Walter.' 'I mean, James, to remind you that God maketh the wrath, and all the evil passions of men, to praise him; that through their working he bringeth about good to them that serve him. Oh, James, James, remember the dying words of our mother, 'The Almighty chooseth our lot better for us than we could choose it for ourselves:' this is a bitter and an unexpected trial, but bear it like one who knows there is a Father's hand in all he meets; and believe with me, the end thereof will be peace.'

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"Emigrate! where?" 'To America; there are no tyrant landlords there. What I cultivate will be my own and my children's after me.' 'Wherever there is ground to lease, James, there will be heartless and tyrant landlords, as well as good and kind ones; for human nature is the same everywhere, remember that; and therefore, go where you will, the effects of its passions will pursue you.' 'Nobody leases farms in America, you know that very well, Walter. I shall take a grant of land; and only

think of the blessing it would be for me to leave the ground I had cleared and cultivated, secure to my children, as their own unalienable property!' and his eyes brightened at the picture his fancy drew. 'I do not deny or gainsay the blessing,' replied Walter, 'of leaving independence to those for whose sakes we toil; but, my dear James, before you enter on a scheme which, if it fails, involves the utter irremediable ruin of yourself and your helpless family, look, and oh look steadily, so as to form a calm and unprejudiced judgment of your own and your family's capability to endure or overcome the incalculable difficulties which inevitably attend it.' 'You are always so gloomy, Walter.' 'No, James, I am not naturally gloomy,' and a sigh escaped him; 'but I have thought much of emigration, more than you know of. I have inquired, and I have read everything I could procure on the subject; and the conclusion to which I came was, that unless the emigrant carries with him a very considerable capital in money, and an inexhaustible one of energy and industry, he had better far remain in his own native land, however poor his lot in it; for nothing but misery, the most acute that our nature can know, must otherwise be his fate. How many thousands of our poor countrymen, who have sailed from these very shores, James, with dreams of wealth, liberty, and independence, dancing before their eyes, are now pining, far from every charity of friend or neighbourhood—their infant families and their hopes, crushed by misery, alike buried in the dust.'

" 'You know, Walter, that if men or women are idle and drunken, they must go to ruin there or here.'

" 'I do not speak of the idle or the drunken; I speak of the sober and industrious, like ourselves. But you should consider the matter well, James, before you take such a step. If you are to be a mere labourer, you should reflect if you are not better in your own country. The wages are, no doubt, from all we hear, much higher, especially in some parts of America, triple it may be of what they are here, yet be not deceived by a sound, James. Suppose you triple your wages, if at the same time the inevitable expense of your family is tripled, which I understand is particularly the case in the article of clothes, where is your profit? If, as you say, you take a grant of land, remember that it is to clear and to drain, not as we cleared Arncliffe, James, of bushes and brushwood, but of trees, the growth of a thousand years. What can the industry of one man, however unwearied, however energetic, do in such a case? And, above all, one who has a delicate wife, and four children, — naked, hungry, and houseless, to provide for, in a climate where the burning summer of four months is succeeded by a winter of eight, severe beyond anything we know? Where are your tools, tools peculiar to the toil, which you never handled in your life? Where your friends to pay for them, and all else required for your undertaking? Suppose you had enough to purchase one, say two sets of such; where are they to be repaired when worn or broken, where perhaps your nearest neighbour is a hundred miles from you? And even if you had a livelihood, where, in such a situation, is all that makes life sweet, the charities and the joys of social life, and of social worship; where the village bell that calls us here to worship our God, surrounded by the living objects of our affection and our friendship? where the grass-grown graves of those we have loved, remind us how soon, our toils and troubles past, we must enter on that scene where the only question will be, not with what comparative ease we have contrived to pass through this, but in how far we have prepared ourselves, and those intrusted to us, for that world no longer unseen? Is this to a father and a Christian no consideration? or is it one that should be wholly set aside in forming a plan for life? Oh, James, James, well might the apostle say, 'If in this world only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable!' — James sobbed aloud. 'What

would you have me do, Walter? 'Exert half the energy and unceasing industry in cultivating Arncleugh, that you would waste in vain on an American wilderness; and you may not only pay your heartless landlord his cruel demand, but maintain your family in far more rational and Christian comfort, than —

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—' Yes, Simon, I have been sorely tried, but I now am happy. I am naturally inclined to indolence, that inlet to every other vice; I have been roused, and compelled to constant activity. I have been brought to live in my brother's house, where I have seen that, as wife and mother, the object of my young heart's love could never have made me happy—yet in her children I have found my happiness, and have lived to say, from the very bottom of my heart, It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' "

THE ONE TALENT.

ONE day, in passing through a village, as we approached a house, the door of which was open, we heard a woman's voice, extended to its utmost pitch, scolding: and presently after, several heavy thumps, followed by the bitter cries of that which had received the thumps, seemingly a girl. Simon's kind heart was stirred within him. He paused before the door, and the same voice went on. "What are ye roarin' there for, like the bars o' Ayr? Gie owre your skirling, ye clatty, stupit, traikit-like baggage—gie owre, and a deevil t' ye, that I should say sic a word! gie owre this minute, I say, or I'll gie ye twice as muckle; I'll gie ye something to skriegh for." The dismal cries sunk into sobs at this formidable threat, and the orator went on—"Ay, ay! this is a din and a half! ye'll greet and skirl, wull ye! till they might hear you twa mile down the water, ye ill-set, stupit, donart-like dirt! A body might as sune gar a cadger's ass learn to read as you, ye bumbaized sumph that you are: that ever a bairn o' mine should be sic a divot! get out of my gate, ye paunerin vermin!"

Simon, whose eyes had begun to kindle at the first sound of the blows, had been gradually nearing the door, and was already within it, when the enraged mother, in whirling round, found herself close to his face. She stood motionless in consternation, while he fixed his searching gaze upon her, as he said, after rather an expressive hem, "Well, neighbour, you seem to be angry." "Tut," said she, the thumper, lowering her voice a full octave, "it's only that bit stupit sumph o' a lassie, it could na say it's lesson, that's a'. Sit down, Maister Simon, sit down," she added, as she lifted a chair and wiped it with her apron. "Was the child idle, or careless, or stubborn, or disobedient?" said Simon, as he sat down. "Na, na, gude truly!" rejoined she, with a self-applauding wag of the head, "my word, she daurna for the life o' her disobey me! and I'se tak' care she's no be idle in this house! but she's sae stupit! just like the father o' her; doitet, donnert brat, it's been bummin' at the bit twa three words for this four hours, for aught I ken, and sorrow sentence o' t it can say yet. I hae nae patience wi' t, and canna be bothered wi' sic a fuzionless pest." "So I see," said Simon, emphatically, clearing his throat. "Come here, my little dear," he continued, holding out his hand to the poor terrified child, who slowly approached him by the route most distant from her mother's fist of which the apartment would admit. "Come, my little dear," repeated Simon, with his kind, melodious, comforting voice, as he set the little trembling innocent on his knee, and wiped her eyes. "I want you to go

a little errand for me. Now, you will go to the hardware shop, where all the pretty things are hanging in the window, and ask the man in it if the buckle of my pony's girth is ready yet, and say I bid him send it by you." Down sprang the child, and disappeared.

The moment she was over the threshold, he turned to the mother, who seemed to dread what was coming, saying to her, with a kinder voice than she anticipated, "Good friend, I certainly greatly disapprove of your conduct to that child. I have sent her away that she might not hear me finding fault with her mother, though you have not scrupled to talk before her in the most unfit terms of her very worthy father, whom it is your duty to honour, and to teach her to honour as well as to love. But you have done far worse than sin against her father; you have sinned against the Father Almighty, not only in giving way to such unmeasured fury against your innocent child, but by vilifying His work." "Now, Gude forgi'e you, Simon Fraser," interrupted the choleric matron, "when did ever I vilify, if that means to abuse, or speak ill of the works of infinite wisdom?" "You did so, a dozen of times in my hearing, just now, when you vilified and abused with tongue and hands that child, because you don't find her so clever as you suppose yourself." "Ye're very sharp on me, Simon," said the mortified randy. "Do you not consider," he continued, "that, whatever capacity she has, or you have, is the gift of God? and that we are not answerable for the extent of capacity He bestows, but for the use we make of it, whether great or small? 'To whom much is given, from them much shall be required.' He who had ten talents was rewarded because he employed them well: he who had but one was not punished because he had but one, but because he did not employ it. How much, then, will they be punished who employ them ill! and, oh, woman, what will be their fate, who by any sort of ill treatment drive others, whether their talents be many or few, either to neglect or misuse them?"

I saw her colour come and go, and her breast heaving, but Simon went on without the least notice. "If you have been gifted with many talents, it is the free gift of God, not, surely, by any power or merit of your own. You confess that your child is neither disobedient nor idle. That for four weary hours the poor little lamb had struggled to get her lesson, and could not, from want of capacity — not from wilfulness or neglect: yet, oh, you cruel woman! you could have the heart to beat with that heavy fist the tender bones of your little helpless innocent in the most unmerciful manner! you arraigned the wisdom of your Creator by abusing the child he has blest you with, because she has only so much capacity as his infinite wisdom sees fit to bestow! Was this employing the talents your Master trusted to you in a praiseworthy manner, think you? or do you not rather think that such a frightful misuse of your reason and your power is more likely to bring upon you the awful sentence which will consign you —" "Have mercy on me, O Simon, have mercy, mercy!" "Mercy! where was your mercy to your child?" he retorted, "you wicked servant, that owed ten thousand talents; where was your mercy to that little child who owed you a penny? what will be the sentence of your Master? You, who think yourself so much more highly gifted than your child, where is your common sense, if you can suppose it possible the terrified innocent, trembling under the dread of your fierce rebukes and pitiless blows, could repeat any lesson, however effectually learned? You first overwhelm her with every abusive term calculated to take away her trust in her own capacity; and then, after averring that she is no better than a cadger's ass, expect her to exert powers which, on your word, she believes she never had nor can have? What more effectual method could you pursue to make your child the unteachable idiot you dare to call her? Oh, woman! where is human nature within you? where the mother's heart? A very tiger, a she-wolf is

kind and tender to its little helpless young — but *your* mercy, where was it? At the awful day of accounts, what will be your doom for marring the work of God, and defacing his image in the soul of your child?"

"Simon, Simon, Simon," shrieked the strong-passioned woman, fully awakened to a sense of her guilt, "haud, haud, haes mercy on me, Simon, I'm sorry for my faut." "And will you amend?" said he. "I'll try, I'll try," she cried. "And watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

The entrance of the child with the pony's girth, with which she came running out of breath, stopped farther reproof. He took her on his knee; gave her a piece of gingerbread, and greatly praised the distinct manner she delivered a message from the shopman. "And now, my pet! I'm going to tell a story to your mother, and you may hear it too if you like." "I would like," said the wee timorous thing, venturing to speak within the entrenchment of Simon's arm. "Well," said he, "there is a woman whom I have met with in many of my customers' houses, where she works as a sempstress, who appears to me to have employed her one *little* talent so well, that I am convinced when she dies, she will, like Lazarus, be carried by the angels to eternal bliss. Her mother was servant in a lady's family, where though she was a mere gawky, she was liked by young and old — for she was perfectly honest, and unconquerably *good-natured*." He looked at the mother. "In process of time it happened that Jean won the heart of a very clever workman. It is said, Like draws to like, but it is not always so, and in matrimony I rather think it is the reverse." The wife cleared her throat. "I understand you, neighbour," said Simon, looking at her in a very provoking manner. "You are thinking your marriage, certainly, was not made out on the first of these plans." "Tut, fie — maister Simon," — said she, fidgeting on her seat, and colouring over the ears. "What the sorrow ken ye o' what I'm thinking?" "No matter," said Simon, "Archie Andrew married Jean Beattie, and in the course of a few years she brought him two daughters. When the eldest was three or four years old — by some awkward manœuvre — Jean tumbled her over the stair, and lighting on her head, she received a dreadful contusion and gash across her brow, and was taken up lifeless. A skilful doctor, however, brought her once more to life — but whether it was the blow on the head, or the natural inheritance of Jean's daughter, can't now be decided — but wee haiverel Peggy grew up vastly more like her mother than her father. So invaluable is good nature felt to be by all who come within its influence, and especially by its possessor, that though talents — even high talents — without it, may be hated, and wisdom remembered with cold respect — good nature is always thought of with the kindest feelings — and the ladies, where Jean had served, took wee Peggy and put her to school. I believe, by dint of much patient hammering on the part of her teacher, after the lapse of years, Peggy was able to read a few well-conned sentences — and to tell which was the chief end of man. But it is not on record that any power or perseverance had ever succeeded in teaching her to hold a pen; or, either with that, or any other instrument, to construct a single letter. But there are few, indeed, of God's creatures who are not of some use, and it was at length discovered that Peggy could be taught to sew. She was therefore, kept at school until she had learned that art in a most perfect manner; and she sews so very beautifully, and so strong, that on this account she was kept in constant employment in the houses of her benefactresses.

"But Peggy's sister, who was a very clever young woman, became consumptive, and had to leave her service, and poor Peggy also returned home to devote herself to the care of one whose talents she revered, though she had none of them herself, and whom she tenderly loved for using them so meekly. During a long illness, which she watched over with unwearied affection, by dint of industry, in sewing at every spare moment of day and

night — she managed to supply this dear sister, not only with necessaries, but *luxuries*. But love cannot save! and Peggy in the depth of sorrow saw her at last cast into an early grave. She did not again go to service, but as a sewer at four-pence a-day maintained herself in comfort. She at that time had only snuff to buy — for her mother, by spinning and making webs, provided her with household clothes.

“But people are not allowed to be too long happy in this world! Her father having high wages and plenty of work, with only himself and his wife to provide for, could not carry his full cup, — in other words, he considered that he was perfectly entitled to ruin himself, so he began to drink. At first he drank profusely, off the heavy end of his week’s wages, every Saturday night; then he began to lie in bed all Sunday; next he required a dram on Monday morning, then he thought he *wudna be the war o’ ane on Monday night* — then every night, every day, every morning, every hour, till he became, in a very short time, an absolutely incurable sot. His trembling hand refused any longer to wield its wonted tool — he got nothing to do — idle and wretched — tottering on his legs — sick and bruised with the bumps and thumps he received when drunk — his eyes red, and without a ray of meaning — his blue nose swelled like a potato — his lips cut and scabbed with their smash upon the last wall he had stoiterated against — he was the very caricature of a devoted victim to the infernal spirit of whiskey. Scores were run up against him among the odious whiskey-houses which he frequented — and, with ill-timed regard for her father’s *honour*, did good foolish Peggy, with a heavy heart, break upon her little store of hoarded wages to pay his drunken debts! — but not one bitter or reproachful thought or word ever entered the heart or escaped the lips either of her or poor Jean. Heavily they would groan and sigh as the usual hour of his return approached, but never when — drunk or sober — *he* could hear them. Neither did they ever, even to each other, mention his drunkenness by its right name. He was sick — or the cauld had ta’en him by the heart — or the heat had just owrecome him — or some trash had disordered his stomach — but never, never, was he drunk! ‘Peggy, will tu look gin tu seest thy father comin’? Och on! I’m wearyin’ sair for him, Peggy!’ ‘Ay, mother, I’ll look — ay — I see him, mother, yonder he’s!’ An irrepressible groan, at the state she saw him in, would sometimes escape, but nothing more. ‘Ay, mother, I’m feart he’s no very weal — but dinna ye be frightet, mother — I’ll just rin and meet him, and help him up the stair, mother! it’s a wile stair, and the revle’s broken — and an awfu’ stair-head that o’ ours,’ — would the affectionate respectful creature mutter to herself as she flew to meet him; and with tenderness, and filial piety, and *refined delicacy*, which would have done honour to any rank — would this unlearned, but virtuous and good-natured daughter bear with, and help to his house and his bed the filthy burden of dirt and whiskey that reeled speechless against her.

“Jean’s health had been gradually declining. She could no longer spin, and was at last confined to bed. Peggy’s little hoard was soon expended; and though she worked continually, and her wages had been from time to time augmenting to sixpence, eightpence, tenpence, and at last to one shilling — still, between her mother’s necessities, and her father’s drinking — she was kept always bare and always busy. She was never out of employment, but it was remarked that she neither came so early nor sewed so rapidly as heretofore; but little was it suspected, while others slept — while even her own father and mother slept — Peggy was up the live long night, washing, and cleaning, and scouring, and preparing everything that father or mother might want through the following day.

“At last one night her father was staggering home drunk, and some unlucky imps, for the fun of seeing him reel, held a bit of twine across his way. He fell, and severely wounded both his legs. He was carried home,

which, in spite of Peggy's kind care, he never left again; the hurts on his legs became frightful sores, and he was soon confined constantly to bed. Peggy had then to give up going out to her work, for both father and mother required her constant presence, and often her help. She therefore took in work, at which she incessantly toiled through night and day, and the neighbours often saw, through the dreary live-long night, the glimmer of her wretched lamp, and the rapid motion of her hand, through the little window.

"Besides washing all her own and her father and mother's clothes, she had now the miserable task of cleaning the dressings of the unhappy man's legs. But mortal ear never heard a murmur, mortal eye never saw a frown on her homely face. Faithful, affectionate, and *polite* to her parents, she had no thought, no wish beyond the bliss of supplying their wants, and comforting them under their sufferings. Their landlord warned them away from their garret, but she told him her father and mother had lived in it forty years, and there they should remain till it pleased the Lord to tak them awa' to the house which is appointed for all living.

"Her lips and voice quivered, and her large black eyes were swimming in tears; but the ungenerous wretch took advantage of those holy feelings only to screw up the rent. Still Peggy never complained. She had aye yet been able to pay the rent on the very term day, and wi' the Lord's help, she wud do't again. The Lord had aye been gude and mercifu' to her, blessed be his name, and he wudna forsake her now when she was in trouble, 'no o' my ain bringin' on, Gude be thankit,' she added, in that peculiar voice and manner by which Peggy so often united the solemn with the ludicrous. That she might be enabled to supply the wants of her parents more plentifully, it was certain that many a day, though she had spent the night in hard labour, or in watching over their death-beds, she allowed herself no nourishment but the drainings of the tea she made to her mother, and her little luxury of snuff. Even this was sorely abridged, for it was at the time when nearly all the ports and harbours in the world were shut against this country, and tobacco rose to an unprecedented price. Still, she never uttered a complaint, never told of a hardship, expressed a want, or asked the slightest assistance, though when a friend offered her a little money, she received it eagerly, and with the humblest gratitude.

"As the season advanced, her father's limbs began to mortify, the poor man died by hairbreadths, one atom after another mouldering away. Every article of bedding, of clothes, every rag was kept clean to the utmost degree. But not all that she could do or imagine was able to prevent the most noisome smell, and in their one little crowded apartment, who need be told the horror of this! He was many weeks in dying, and faithful Peggy spent day and night at his bedside and her mother's. She could then take in no work, for every moment was occupied, and every thought and feeling filled to the brim with deep and dismal interest. At last it pleased Heaven to release both father and mother within a few days of each other. She made their shrouds, and with pious reverence prepared their dead bodies to be laid in decency into the coffins which a wright, who knew Peggy's worth, made for them, trusting to her restless honesty for payment. At the same time a distant relation of her mother's unexpectedly giving her two guineas, she was enabled to lay her father and then her mother respectably in the dust.

"It was not for a long while after these events that I again saw Peggy. When one night arriving very late at the town where she lives, I slackened my pace as I passed a burying-ground in its outskirts, and was gazing on those silent mansions, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, when I thought I saw a figure move among the graves. I went close up to the wall, and then saw that it was a woman, and that she was coming away. I stood still and silent till she passed, when I discovered

that it was Peggy, decently wrapped in her scarlet cloth cloak, and the hood drawn close over her face. 'Peggy,' I said, and held out my hand. She started, but soon recognised me by the moonlight; and after a few words, we walked on a while in silence. At last she said, 'My poor father and mother, Simon, they're awa now! Ay, they've baith gotten awa! They were sair sufferers, and I maun bless the Lord for pleasing to tak' them out o' this weary warld; but I'm left in't, Simon; I'm left in't my lane! But the Lord's will be done! Nae sister, nae brither have I! My father and mother was a' I had, and they're gane hame; the Lord mak' me thankfu! — but I'm left! It's a bleak world to me!' In the same breath she went on. 'I'm working as hard as ever I'm able, to pay their coffins. John Baird, honest man, he trusted me, and I hope he'll be nae loser. I've paid up the maist part o' baith the coffins now, Maister Simon, — and aye when I can get my wark by, at a reasonable hour, I rin in the gloamin' to the kirk-yard, just to sit a while aside their graves. I think I'm no my lane when I'm sitting there, and I'm my lane a' ither places, Simon; maist o' a' in the lone house. It's as 't were a cauld wat shroud fa'ing owre my heart when I gang in till't at night after my wark. I neither like to gang in till't nor to bide awa, for it was their house, for more than forty years, — a cauld, worthless, damp hole it aye was, but it was theirs, — it was a' the house e'er they had, and tho' I ha'e nae use for 't, as lang as I leave I'll keep it, and pay the rent o' 't, for their sakes. Heigh how, Mr. Simon, when I gang in till't at night, cauld and dark, neither fire nor candle, and think on them and where they're lying, what can I do but just slip awa' to the kirk-yard, and then I find mysel' near a' that 's left to me o' them and my puir sister! Och, I wish I were out o' this wearisome, lonesome world;' but, checking herself, she added, 'but, Gude forgi'e me! I hope I'll no dee till I've paid John Baird the coffins, and the mort-claith — I had the best ane; Mr. Simon, the braw bonny new ane he got no lang syne; it was a wee dearer, but it was a', it was the last I could do for them!'

"Peggy would have run on for an hour, or for any length of time, but she now found herself at the entrance to her dark, lonely dwelling, and bidding me good night, we parted. Next time I saw her was in a hot summer evening, when I met her hurrying along, bare-footed, with stockings and shoes tied by the garters, under her arm. As soon as the first salutations were hurried by, she told me she had paid up the last sixpence of the coffins and the mort-cloth, 'and now,' said she, 'I'm ready to dee whenever it's the Lord's wull: and John Baird can mak' nae objection now. And I'm gaun down to the town here, to pay a shilling I awe to a woman; it's been owre lang awin,' — but as lang as John Baird, and the mort-claith, and the twa coffins was lyin' on my head, I could think o' naething else.' And she gave a very heavy sigh, as she always did when she alluded to this subject. I asked how far she had walked to pay the shilling. 'Only frae St. what d' ye ca't,' she replied, pointing back, 'owre there, ayont the hill,' — meaning a village eight miles off. 'And gude night wi' you, Mr. Simon. I maunna taigle mysel', for I maun be back again afore night.' This shilling was the last of Peggy's debts, and when I saw her not long ago, she had 30*l.* in the savings' bank!

"Now, goodwife, tell me, are you entitled to look down upon any of God's creatures, when you see, by what I have told you of poor Peggy Andrew, whose powers and talents are of the very humblest order, what such a lowly, ignorant being can perform? The child, gifted with ten talents, might have been an object of far more pride to a parent, but never could have performed a more pious duty, or, I will venture in all humility to say, have offered a more acceptable service to the Almighty.

"Learn, I pray you, to think soberly of yourself; think of the long forbearance of the infinitely perfect God, who, in spite of all our sins and

rebellions, endures, sustains, blesses us, — and crowns our guilty heads with loving kindness and with tender mercies ; and don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but, I repeat again, think soberly. Don't care to disdain talents you may think inferior to your own ; but which, though unknown and overlooked by you, may be accompanied by far more useful qualities, far more worthily employed.

"Cherish this good, sweet little child, and pray to God to pardon yourself, and to spare her. Send her to a proper school, where, I'll answer for it, she'll learn like other children : and don't lead yourself into temptation by attempting a task you must feel in your heart you are most unfit for. Remember it is they who think themselves wise who are most likely to become fools."

The woman reddened from a mixed feeling of shame and painful mortification at Simon's fearless freedom : but, on parting, he kindly gave her his hand, and his blessing. She was, in fact, a clever woman, though not so much so as she supposed. She followed his advice ; called herself to account for her evil and ungovernable passions ; sent her child to school, where, as Simon predicted, she learned like other children. By cherishing and treating her with kindness, she cherished in her own heart some of the best feelings of which it is susceptible, the feelings of a mother, and was rewarded by the little gentle creature's enthusiastic affection and countless tiny services.

THE FOUNDLING.

PASSING in the course of our wandering through a thriving sea-port, Simon turned into a large shop to make some purchases. At a desk behind the counter sat a weather-beaten rough little man, who was too much occupied with his day-book and ledger to observe us. While the shopman was supplying our wants, Simon hailed him with "Well captain, how goes it?" Up, or rather down, started the little bustling man from his tall three-legged stool, and joyously returned the salutation. Balancing himself on his two feet, as if he had been standing on deck in a stiff breeze, and pulling up, at each side, what no man now dare call his breeches, that outlawed word, as sailors are wont to haul up their trowsers at the end of a job, he clapped both hands into his waistcoat pockets, and clearing his throat with an emphatic wag of his head and a wink with one eye, he went on to answer Simon's queries after his welfare, in a few common-place phrases which conveyed but little information. He was evidently habituated to say nothing that might afterwards rise up to trouble him ; and the sight of a stranger with his old friend seemed for the time to act like a safety-valve upon his mind. "Thank ye, Mr. Frazer, thank ye, thank ye, safe at anchor, safe at anchor now, Mr. Frazer ; had my rough day ; in port now ; try to make the most of it ; hard times these, though ; poor sales, poor sales, sir ; worse pay," &c. &c. He was full of civility, and activity, and anxiety to serve us ; asked Simon to his house to dine, to sleep, and so forth, but we only stayed to pay what was bought, and the instant we were on the street again, Simon began, "It is worth walking five Scotch miles to see that man ! if it were for no more than to teach every thing that lives, that no man born in this blessed country, however low and wretched his situation, need despair." "Who is he?" said I. "Who is he!" repeated Simon. "Indeed, my boy, no many could tell you that ! but I will tell you all I know of him. About forty years ago, he was put into the basket of the foundling hospital in Edinburgh, with a ten pound bank note, and a scrawl pinned to his breast, stating that his name should be Charles Galloway. I have no

power, whatever might be my wish, to lay open the secrets of the prison-house, and tell whether the unhappy infants, whom fathers and mothers forsook, found that mercy and kindness under the hands of strangers, which their parents denied. Certain it is, this poor man's appearance bears heavy marks of but merciless treatment; but accidents may happen even in spite of care. And whether his bones were broken and his joints twisted then, or afterwards when apprenticed, at a very early age, as a sea-boy on board a Leith trader, I do not know. It is too true that *there* he did receive the most cruel usage from the savage master and crew, which became at last so intolerable, that, driven to absolute despair, he made his escape in the night, while the vessel was lying at Bristol, with no other possession than the ragged clothes on his back. He ran for his life through the unknown city, thinking every sound he heard was a pursuer; and having by the time day dawned reached the open country, he hid himself in a hole till it was again dark. He then set forward once more, wandering he knew not whither, along cross-roads and by-ways, till about noon the following day, he came to a farm-steading, when, utterly exhausted with hunger and misery, he staggered into an open out-house, and sinking down among some straw, fell asleep. When he awoke, he found several people standing near him, and his dirty ragged appearance exciting suspicion, they were about to tumble him into the road. But hunger and misery are eloquent pleaders! He implored food and mercy, and told them his story. Instantly, a warm-hearted Irishman, nearly as ragged as himself, started up in his behalf, and by his powerful intercession, procured the starving boy plenty to eat from the well-fed English servants; and following up the impression he had made on the hearts of his poor fellow-labourers, he gathered among them half-a-crown, which he presented to the little wandering exile. He then set him on the road to London, and gave him kind words and kind wishes at parting. So that, as Charles himself told me, while tears were gushing over his cheeks—he has never since seen an Irishman but he felt his heart warmed, and his ears tingle at the music of the honest brogue.

“On and on wandered and toiled the poor little naked lonely wretch. Oh, what greater punishment could one wish his unnatural parents than to have thus seen and known their forlorn child! But no one knew him, and he entered the wilds of London, friendless and wo-worn, without one earthly possession but the Irishman's half-crown, which, rather than break upon, he had begged and starved on the road. But he had received kindness—had heard the words and the voice of pity, and sympathy, and affection, and he was no longer desperate, and no longer hated and feared his species—Blessed be Ireland!

“By cleaning himself, and by means of his precious long-haired half-crown, making the utmost of his appearance, he got the master of a vessel to admit him on board his ship as a sea-boy; and, once there, he took care to behave so well that he should never be turned out. By serving and obliging the sailors, taking their jokes and thumps with good humour, and never allowing himself to be provoked or sulky at the many vexations and plagues which the youngest and littlest thing—dog or boy—on board a ship is always heir to; this poor wee practical philosopher, besides many small favours and donations, gained to himself the good-will of the captain, the mate, and the men; and by the time the ship returned to port, had, from his early command of temper, purchased for himself an excellent character. Patient and steady, he held on his humble career, always advancing. And as he compared one month as it passed with the month that had gone before, he saw and felt, that in spite of all his apparently overwhelming disadvantages, his progress was still forward, and ever with accelerating speed.

“While in port, he redoubled his efforts to oblige and serve the master.

The sailors then all leave the ship, and the labour of delivering the cargo, cleaning her out, and re-loading and preparing again for sea, devolves on hired jobbers and the apprentices. Here the captain felt all the importance of having an honest faithful boy, on whose perfect obedience and common sense he could rely, to watch while he was unavoidably absent; and Charles had plenty to do, even when others were at play. Whether he was sufficiently rewarded for all this, I do not know. It but too often happens that when a service or a benefit is unexpected, it is received with gratitude and delight; but the longer such services and favours are continued, the less they are thought of, and are very soon considered, if not demanded, as a right. While the sailors, many of them three times his age, were ranging about in the wildest dissipation and idleness, this poor destitute little boy, with neither home nor relation to shelter, or help, or direct him, after all the severe toil of each successive day, instead of going to amusement or sleep, cleaned himself, no easy task! from the pitch and tar and dirt with which he was besmeared; and with his little savings, pinched off himself when hungry and cold, he went to a night-school to improve his reading and writing, and afterwards to learn arithmetic and navigation. His extreme eagerness, his agony to improve, so delighted his teacher, an old disabled seaman with only one leg, that he presented him with the remains of one or two useful books, a scale and old pair of compasses, all which, though like himself nearly worn out in the service, were of unspeakable value to the laborious indefatigable learner. What a blessing to him would have been the money it took to make a sailor once drunk! but though he saw their delirious waste, so disunited was he from every one on earth, so utterly destitute of a claim upon any creature, so unused to have his miseries, necessities, or wishes thought of or supplied by any but himself, that such an idea did not occur to him.

"When the ship was again to sail, and all were once more on board, most of the men were mortal drunk. Many of them sick and worn out, many of them bruised, and bloody, and dirty. Poor Charles, as he arranged the tackling aloft, and heard the sottish uproar, and saw the degraded objects below upon deck, could not but think that, in spite of the great riches in his eyes, which each of these sailors possessed when they went on shore, their plenty of time, their means of enjoyment and improvement, of which he was continually thinking, then they all were as poor and penniless as himself, far more dirty, far more exhausted, and sick, and bruised, and ignorant, than himself, after all his ceaseless toils in performing his duty to the captain and himself. This was one of the practical lessons Charles never forgot.

"Even before his apprenticeship was out, having at different times received small presents of money from the captain and passengers, his sagacity and wits, sharpened by the excellent whetstone of necessity, led him, as if by instinct, to lay out this little treasure in the most judicious and profitable miniature speculations. And though at first his gains to the wasteful blustering seamen seemed so small, that he was constantly the butt of their scornful wit and jeers; yet they were great to him who had nothing, and knew so well how to use them. By the time his indenture expired, he was a stout healthy lad, and a steady excellent seaman, to whom all on board could trust, and possessing the good-will of all. He still continued in the same ship, and from his knowledge of navigation, having on several occasions done the duty of second mate excellently well, on the first opportunity the captain promoted him. It was not long before he was appointed mate; and, in the course of a few voyages after, the captain having left the West Indies in bad health, he navigated the ship safely to port, and what was still more difficult, preserved the most perfect discipline among the men, some of them so lately his superiors. His old friend

and master being unable to go to sea next voyage, the owners appointed Charles in the interim captain; and, when he looked back on the day he first entered London, with scarcely clothes to cover him, without one earthly friend, without a hole where to lay his head, and the poor Irishman's half-crown, all he had to look to as the means of existence; and when he cast back his eye a little farther still, and remembered that even then he was rich and happy in comparison of the night, when, a half-naked, trembling, starving fugitive, he was flying from Bristol, starting at every footstep, and hearing the crack of a rope's end in every sound, it seemed to himself that he was in a dream!

"He managed the ship well; and was continued as a captain by the same owners; but like other people, who, when they are well, generally invent some excuse for being uneasy—he was seized with home-sickness, and got himself appointed master of a ship sailing for Scotland. So, behold his home-sickness relieved—but what, think you, rose in its stead? What but a sick fever of the heart to know who he was! this was a problem not easily solved. A man who knew nothing of himself but what I have told you, was not likely to learn much more. He therefore, in the mean while, chose a new object for the fever in his heart, and married. Calmness succeeded for a time this hurly-burly of the spirits, but during every voyage the original disease returned. Still, all his ruminations, speculations, and consultations ended in nothing.

"At last, having been one day giving orders to one of his sailors while in harbour, and receiving an insolent answer, all the captain rose in his heart, and wheeling round on the man with a stamp and a 'd'ye know who ye're speaking to?' his opponent calmly replied, 'If I did, it would be more than you do; a retort so startling and so true, that he turned away in silence, to chew the cud of many a bitter fancy. It happened that a newly appointed port-officer was near enough to hear the sailor's retort, and to see its effect on the little mortified captain; and after cogitating with his wife over some *auld lang syne* scandals, he proceeded to Captain Galloway's house. He briefly told him he had some idea he might be able to inform him who his relations were, hearing which long-wished-for words nearly cured the wound inflicted by the sailor. He soon stated all he knew of himself to the stranger, who, in return, advised him to write to a lady in Galloway, whose address he gave, adding, 'If my conjectures are right, she is your aunt.' The captain was but too happy to follow the suggestion; but who shall describe, or who, but one so situated, can conceive the perturbation of soul in which he awaited the reply to his letter? Even sooner than he dared to expect, a reply arrived. He rushed to a room by himself, tore open the seal, and the paper on which he looked—the light—the house—the world swam before his eyes as he read the first words that met them, 'My dear nephew.' The faintness of violent emotion soon wore off, and the mystery of his existence was clearly unravelled. He found he was sprung of a high and ancient family, though, as probably he anticipated, his own birth not very honourable! He soon after had an interview with his mother, by that time a virtuous, venerable matron, *highly respectable*.

"I think it would puzzle any ordinary mind to conceive what *her* feelings and thoughts must have been when this living evidence of the deeds of other years stood before her! She wished him to change his name for her own, but that he spiritedly refused. 'However honourable the name may be to others, God knows I owe it little; and I will keep that in which, by his blessing, I struggled through my deserted infancy, my starving and miserable childhood, and toilsome unfriended youth.'

"Soon after this period he gave up the sea, having realized above 4000*l*. He is now a ship-owner, and part of his money being invested in that shop from which his ships are supplied with stores, it thereby draws a

double profit. Many strange instances I have known of wealth and prosperity attendant on good conduct in the poor, but Charles Galloway surpasses them all. For there he sits, scarcely yet forty years of age, surrounded with all that can make an honest man happy and comfortable—a good name, good health, a good wife, good children, and a competency."

THE VALUE OF A GOOD MOTHER.

As we went on our way, Simon's half-uttered words stopped on his tongue as he paused and fixed his keen inquiring eyes on an old, worn-down, gray-haired man, carrying a basket of water-cresses, which he was advertising for sale in a foolish rhyme, filted forth with a feeble cracked voice. I expected to see Simon, as usual, administer to the wants of this very poor-looking beggar; but there he stood, without any movement of the sort, and still observing the man with a most peculiar expression. At last, this merchant of water-cresses turning round, his eyes met Simon's, his countenance fell, the sounds died away in his throat, and he stood seemingly unable to move. "So Duncan," said Simon, "and has it already come to this? I knew it would be so some time or other; but, truly, I did not think it would be in my day." "Ah, Mr. Frazer," said he in a deploring tone, and pulling off his hat, "ah, sir, I've been very unfortunate! ah, Mr. Frazer, tak' pity on a pair auld man!" and trying to look pitiable and interesting, his wicked countenance took on such an expression of hypocrisy and cunning, that I instinctively turned away my eyes. "My pity extends to a sinful degree," said Simon, "for it withholds me from exposing you as I ought. So I will get out of the way of temptation as soon as I can;" and as he turned off he chucked a trifle into the wretch's basket. After we were past a few steps, like Lot's wife, I was tempted to turn and look back on the old sinner, and never shall I forget his attitude and appearance. His feet were fixed on the spot where we left him, his knees crooked, his back bowed; his hat thrown side-ways on his head, which was turned round and downwards, to look after us, and continued slowly turning as Simon walked on. His teeth set, his under lip and chin projecting with a grin; and such a sinister look of hypocrisy, cunning, infernal malice, and inveterate hate, as would have puzzled a fiend to imitate. I touched Simon, and he looked about, when the old monster instantly took off his hat and bowed! there was a time when I could have laughed at the impotent malignity of the wretch; but now it actually made me sick.

"Oh, the sinner," cried Simon, "he will die as he lived—though it was long unknown—a disgrace to his species! Bless God for your mother, boy—your excellent, clever, *virtuous* mother," said the good man. "Bless God for her every day and hour of your life." "And for Simon," said I. "For your mother!" he repeated with emphasis. "What was all I could do? What is all any one can do by occasional help and advice, which is all that those who are not inmates ever can bestow—to compare with the perpetually operating influence of a mother's efforts and example, whether it be for good or for evil? Even a father, ay, I repeat it, even a father can but aid the wife's and mother's efforts. And all the exertions of the best and cleverest man on earth to produce comfort in his house, or bring up his children well, are, without the concurrence of his wife, utterly ineffectual. He may lay in stores, he may purchase clothes for himself and his family, he may send them to school; still, if his wife is a fool, or a sloven, or idle, or careless, his money and his means fade away like the morning cloud and the early dew. On the contrary, even when a father is careless or expen-

sive, or, that bitterest of evils, drunken, if he has a clever and conscientious wife, see, in spite of him, how his house is kept and his children thrive! It is wonderful! perhaps more wonderful than if she were a widow; for then, though her means are too often cut short, what she procures by her industry is not wasted, her time is not lost, her patience and temper are not tried, or her children poisoned by the example of a drunkard. It is rarely a widow's children turn out ill. On the contrary, I could point out to you many of the most respectable thriving men at home and abroad, who, like yourself, are the sons of widows left nearly destitute. But look to the sons of widowers, — alas, alas! that is too often a dismal sight, unless where a sister, an aunt, or a grandmother helps to supply the blank. In short, my son, the fact is just this: All the real solid virtue and comfort and joy and respectability of domestic life, among rich and poor, is derived from women. Every thing else is but appearance, varnish-glaze. And he who despises women must either have looked upon life with the eyes of ignorance and folly, or through the medium of vice. Those whose habits and feelings have been formed among the profligate, do n't know worth and virtue when they are before their eyes. All that is not glaring vice, they conclude to be hypocrisy and cunning. This is one of the blights left by vice upon the minds of men. Many a wicked worthless wretch there is among women. Many a cruel unprincipled tigress — many a useless, wasteful, exasperating fool; and to this pitiable fact, many an honest man's house and bairns bear dismal witness. I am not the advocate of their folly or vice, but I would like to impress every man whom I value and wish well, with the conviction of the *infinite importance* of woman in every circumstance and relation of human life, from the cradle to the grave! On the woman he marries depends a man's own happiness, often his character, still more often his respectability through life and the place he holds in society. From her his sons will derive their capacities and characters, whether from inheritance or from the slow but sure influence of the earliest example and education, I don't pretend to tell, but one thing is certain, no silly mother ever had a clever son. If sons are so much influenced by mothers, what must their influence upon the principles, dispositions, and characters of daughters be? In short, he who wishes for comfort at home, and for the blessing of well-ordered, obedient, and respectable children, either while they are infants, or after they grow up, had better think in time, and weigh well the disposition and principles of her he means to make his wife."

THE WAGES OF SIN.

"But what of Duncan?" said I. Simon hemmed. "Duncan is a bad subject, for he is the son of a most villanous mother. She, like yours, was early left a widow, with one son and one daughter; but she followed a different course in their education, for she brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the devil. She was clever, and worked hard, and kept them always neat and clean; so, was much praised and countenanced by those who considered her the model of a good widow and mother. She was a close attender of church, most particular and nice in her choice of preachers, being a great judge of doctrines; and none sung psalms so loud or so well as the pious widow and her orphans. They were both put to school. Duncan being made schoolboy, got his education as remuneration for sweeping and keeping the school clean, and lighting the fires. Here, with caution and wisdom far beyond his years, he, day by day, carried on his petty pilferings of pens, paper, pencils, slates, knives, and books; and the careless heedless little wights got many a scold and many a licking, at school and

at home, for the losses thus incurred from their supposed misconduct. When any proof was brought that the articles missing had been abstracted from the school, Duncan was always the first to discover it, and always about such times he was sure to lose a slate or book of his own, and mourn over it with bitter wailings. His sister on her part conducted herself to admiration, and all went swimmingly on.

"After his school days, Duncan was apprenticed to a gardener; and in this department had a larger field for his genius to exercise itself upon. He tithed every article sold, and, in the fruit season, stole so judiciously, that stealing was never suspected. His master and he merely talked over, as a circumstance they had observed before, that this season, like many seasons when the crops looked well, did not turn out so profitable as they promised. Now and then, in the latter years of his service, there was a grand robbery of his master's garden and all the gardens round, and Duncan was always the first to set off in quest of the thieves and the property, and it was wonderful how boldly he would watch alone whole nights and at all hazards for his good master's sake. He would not fear to face a score of thieves, not he, thieves are always cowards!

"Whether any suspicion had arisen in the mind of the master, which he wished to set at rest, I know not; but, without the least hint to any even of his own family, he one night stole into his garden, and placed himself where he could see and hear all round. He had laid his account with watching all night, and was as much astonished as if he had not gone to look for thieves, when, a moment after he had taken his station, he saw, between him and an opposite wall, a man with a load on his shoulders. The honest fellow stood breathless and speechless gazing on this vision. The bag was set down near the wall, and the person returned by the same path. The gardener's wits gradually returned, and on seeing him once more with a load proceeding deliberately to the same spot, he levelled his musket and fired at his legs. He instantly started aside beyond the smoke of his gun, and saw bag and man fall—but with the agility of youth, instigated by terror, and aided by long practice, he sprung forward, rushed to the wall, and threw himself over it like a squirrel, before the gardener could lay hands on him. He followed him over the wall at the instant, but no Duncan was there; and next morning, no Duncan came to his work. Diligent search was made, but, of course, his pious parent and sister knew nothing of his fate. And loud and grievous were their lamentations, and their complaints of ill usage, mingled with scriptural ejaculations and imprecations, as they lifted up their voices and wept. The talk and wonder, and anger and lies, which every such occurrence occasions in a small town, soon died away. Duncan and his mother and sister ceased to be thought of; and, some time after, they were missed from their house, from which they had, in silence and darkness, been gradually conveying its ill-gotten contents. They had left it in the same way, leaving the door closed and the windows open; thus bilking the landlord of his rent. How troublesome it is to be wicked!

"Far from their former dwelling, this exemplary mother and dutiful children now set up anew. She, the mother, as an eminently pious woman, the son as gardener, &c.; 'Strawberries and Cream,' 'Fruits in their Seasons,' adorning his garden gate; and the excellent daughter humbly devoted herself to assist them both. Robbery was now brought among them to the rank of a science. They improved upon all former systems, and reduced their own, especially by the division of labour, to the most beautiful simplicity. From this time robberies were committed in every quarter of the town and neighbourhood; every thing was their prey, yet no one ever suspected the real thief. It was supposed that there must be at least two dozen in the gang, so extensive and perpetual were the thefts;

and it is quite inconceivable what three people could make of all they carried off. In the course of my journeyings, I arrived late one evening at an inn in the neighbourhood of this haunted town, which was so crowded with travellers that I could not get a bed within the house. But the people and I were old friends, and rather than leave them, I accepted their offer of a comfortable bed in an out-house at a little distance, where I lay quietly down to sleep, curtained round by a large quantity of clothes hung upon ropes to dry. In the night I awoke, and scarcely remembering at first where I was, felt no alarm on seeing a light. I however, soon heard as well as saw what brought me to my senses. The clothes upon the ropes were disappearing; and a sheet that hung near my bed being pulled off, I saw a man who was behind it thrust it into a bag. I remained an instant in uncertainty; and, oh! what a volume of thoughts passed along my mind in that instant! I was naked—I was perfectly unarmed—I had loaded pistols, but they were beyond my reach. The villain might be armed, and have the power to murder me instantly. Then, I thought the attacker has always the advantage. I had better surprise him than let him surprise me. He was just far enough from me to admit of my springing upon him. The height of my bed was in my favour. At the instant, with one bound, I threw myself on his breast, seized his throat, and, falling, he dragged me down with him. We had a desperate struggle on the floor, and I, being still above him, supposed from his movements being less energetic for a moment, that he was about to yield, when suddenly by the feeble light I perceived he had been taking a spring-knife from his breast-pocket, which, no doubt, the next moment would have been in my heart. With me it was now do or die,—not a mere struggle for a prisoner. I seized the villain's hand that held the knife, and with the other giving a twist to his neck-cloth, told him, while he had yet sense left, to let go the knife; otherwise, I would hold his throat till I strangled him. It was not till his face was black, blood spouting from his nose, and his eyes strained to bursting, that he yielded the knife; when I instantly let go my hold and rose, standing on the defensive and grasping it open in my hand. He lay for a little recovering his breath, which would so soon have been past recovery; then, starting up, set his toe into a notch of the partition which separated this apartment from the stable, sprung up to a loft above, and was gone. I snatched his horn-lantern and followed as fast as I could, but at the moment I was beginning to descend through the hole where he disappeared, I heard the stable door slapped to and locked, and a heavy, hurried step rushing from the place. I threw on my clothes, and going to the house, roused up my host. On examination of the knife and bag, we found no mark, but on a handkerchief, in which he had bundled up by themselves some fine articles of woman's dress, were sewed the letters D. M'Q. Duncan M'Quarry, the notorious thief and gardener, as I am a living man! exclaimed I. He kept a whole district in commotion for years, and never was suspected! In the bottom of the lantern lay a key which looked like that of a house door, and this we concluded to be the door of his mother's house, or his garden, for there was nothing particular in its make. Not a moment was to be lost. We set off to the nearest magistrate, and gave in the needful information; a warrant was made out, and before day-light Mr. Duncan was safely lodged in jail. He was found in bed sleeping with uncommon assiduity, and could not be wakened without much shaking and bawling; when, however, his strenuous efforts to remain asleep had been overcome, he was, for a proper length of time, in all the maze of innocent wonder, and quite unable to understand what had happened or what the officers wanted. I knew him instantly, and showed the blue mark of my deadly grasp in his wrist, and the rope which should have hanged him would not have left more traces on his neck than my powerful tourniquet had. However,

having gone to bed in the dark, and being obliged to fall asleep in such a hurry, he had not observed that his nose and wrist were all bloody.

"Loads of every species of property were found hidden, perfectly useless, in their den, and in holes in their garden, rusted, rotted, and destroyed; so that they literally robbed others of that 'which not enriched them' — not daring to use what might lead to suspicion." "And how," said I, "did this villain escape the gallows?" "Because he escaped from jail," replied Simon; "an event that often occurs in our dear native land even unto this day; and I am not sure that it is any sign of the morals of a country being in a very bad state when the prisons are so little used that they get out of repair. He was wonderfully nimble, and had obviously studied and practised from childhood, och, och! — like unhappy James Barr — the art of ascending and springing over walls; and it need excite little astonishment if he, who could glide through a crevice like an eel, escaped from a mouldering county jail. Duncan was outlawed. The mother and daughter were confined and tried as ressetters, and banished the county. Such was the end of that part of the family compact.

"After a life of sin and shame, and dread and trembling — night watchings and night wanderings — never sleeping an hour in peace — never eating one happy, honest meal — with every crime and misery crowned by the horrible toilsome farce of pretended sanctity, — here they were, with far more than ordinary talents — indeed their talents would have raised them to wealth and respectability in any trade, as their looks might have graced any rank, — here they were, dispersed and banished beggars — objects of universal detestation; for even the most careless and callous could not think, but with horror, of their fearful mockery of religion. What finally became of the mother I do not know. In some of my wanderings I discovered the sister, married to a *negro*, if possible more wicked and worthless than herself. They were both drunkards — had no visible mode of existence — and hated each other, and beat each other without mercy or measure. Duncan I also saw as under-gardener to a gentleman. I fixed my eyes on his once handsome face, which was then becoming strongly marked with that diabolical expression which struck you so much to-day. He saw me, knew me, and became ghastly pale. I pointed to the high-road, saying, 'The sooner you are off the better.' He took the hint, and was seen no more. Perhaps I did wrong to let such a villain escape the gallows; but — between you and me, my lad — though I had so nearly choked him myself, and exerted every faculty in detecting and arresting him while my blood was in a ferment, and certainly would have given evidence against him truly and honestly; yet the thoughts of his certain conviction and death lay heavy on my spirits; and I was wonderfully comforted, though I said little, when I heard of his escape."

VANITY LEADS THE WAY TO VICE.

On the evening of a fine day we arrived at a village, where we found there was a dance to celebrate the birth of a young laird. Simon delighted in seeing young people happy; and being well known in the place from frequently passing that way, we immediately repaired to the large open barn belonging to the inn, to which the sound of the fiddle guided us. All seemed glad to see him. Even the dancers paused to give him their hand, or to twirl him round as they passed. There were a considerable number of handsome lads and lasses, all decked in their best clothes, and dancing with that peculiar energy and good-will which distinguishes us Scotch folks under the inspiration of our own national music. Some of the older people, whose

dancing days were over, sat on the benches cracking their jokes upon each other, or settling the state of the weather, the state of the crops, or the rise or fall of the markets, not seeming to see or notice the dancers; yet, ever and anon might be seen the father's eye glisten as it glanced after his fair-faced daughter, or buirdly son, as they capered and shuffled along, careless of every thing but the present moment and its enjoyments.

By dint of frequent application to the guidwife's pint stoup, as the evening advanced, some of the young men began to grow rather noisy in their mirth; and, about the same time, the laird came in to look, as he said, how the fun was going on, and with the frankest good humour encouraged the innocent gayety. However, as he walked about, saying something kind and agreeable to all, he saw some unruly conduct among the lads, and some of the handsomest of the girls looking saucy and reserved. While quietly looking about for the cause of this, above the noise of the music, and mirth, and dancing, he heard rude boisterous sounds from a corner, and silently approaching the place, he saw a young fellow, who was hardly able to stand upright, with many blustering and idle words, attempting to haul a nice little well-dressed lass from her seat. "Haud aff your hands, I tell you, Tam, for I canna bide you to touch me, and I wunna dance wi' you, so ye needna try't." "Ye'll no dance wi' me!" hiccupped the youth; "but ye shall dance wi' me — what for will ye no dance wi' me? Ye saucy flirt: my word ye're no blate." "It's you that's no blate, to think ony decent woman would dance wi' you that canna stand, let a be dance. Aff wi' you! ye hae a smell o' rum and whiskey that maks me sick. I wonder ye dinna think shame o' yourself afore the laird — he that mortally hates drunk folk." "What care I for the laird!" he blustered forth, "and come you, ye shall dance;" and as he was uttering this and much more, he attempted to lay hold of her. But the laird's arm came between him and his prey, as he calmly said, "Though you do n't care for the laird, the laird will take care of you;" and, beckoning two of his servants from the dance, he desired them to carry the mute and astounded culprit to an adjoining out-house, and lock him up, adding, "and bring me the key."

This shock restored most of those who had been drinking to a state of sobriety; but the light-hearted mirth of the evening was gone, and could not be restored. The laird expressed his high approbation of the worthy little blushing maid who had so steadily expressed her aversion at drinking, and so firmly repulsed the approach of her dissipated admirer. "She is a good and wise girl, though so young," said he, "and I recommend her conduct just now to the imitation of every girl in the room. It is in vain that government taxes spirits through the whole of their progress from the barley to the gill-stoup; it is in vain that laws enforce morality and punish crimes, or that ministers preach, or fathers and mothers lecture and growl, or that an angry laird locks up an offender, as long as young women have so little sense, and modesty, and forethought, as to suffer any lad in their company who is either drunk or a drinker. As long as lads find that, in spite of all that grave folks say, — those whom they like best will endure them — not to say welcome them, drunk or sober, all hope of curing the dreadful evil is vain. I must think the woman mad as well as wicked who dares to marry a drinker; and a dree'd out life of misery and poverty will be the least of her punishment even in this world;" and looking round for the little damsel, he said, as he patted her head, "but a good wise girl like this, who, though perhaps her poor little heart was sore the while, drives a drunkard from her presence, is not only using the best means in her power to reform him, but is a real benefactress to her country. People think too little, in every case, of the infinite value of their good example. 'Oh!' they say, 'I am but one; what can I do?' Another says, 'I am but one, — what can I do?' So says a third, so may each one in a whole village —

a whole county — a whole nation. What are all these but thousands of ones? Each one, by himself one, perhaps of no power to turn the national scale one way or other, though of eternal importance to himself; but if each of these ones, or any number of them, try to do good in every possible way, and encourage it in others, can anything else be equal to this in benefiting the nation? Virtue is the true national wealth!"

He then went off to the people of the inn, who were in attendance, and we had the particular pleasure of hearing the animated and severe reproof he gave them for daring, as he said, 'to pollute the innocent enjoyments of the evening, by setting up their cursed poison for sale, and tempting thoughtless fellows, who little needed anything to set their young blood in a flame. He called it a heavy and a grievous crime, whatever *they* might think of it, whatever name they might give it, or however they might try to palliate and slur it over to their consciences — a crime for which they would be called to an awful account at the judgment-seat of God. "For if, as we are often told in his holy word, no drunkard can in any wise enter the kingdom of heaven, how much less can *they* hope to enter there who have encouraged and tempted him to this destructive, this most perilous vice? It is an inlet, nay, it is a vortex, that whirls in every crime, and involves every calamity. Health, wealth, reputation, all a man values or venerates, or loves — his parents, his wife, and his children, every thing that sweetens life, every hope on earth and heaven, all hurled along to ruin! all dear, all holy ties torn, blighted, sacrificed; and for what? — Could it be believed by men or angels, if the fact did not glare on us at every turn — for the pleasure of swallowing whiskey!" He walked slowly out, holding up and waving both his hands, as if inly pursuing a subject on which he would say no more.

As the laird retired, one of the gash old carles said, with a nod of his head to one side — "Hech, but I'm blythe to see our braw, bonny young laird, though he be sae saft and ceevil in his gaet, has as muckle o' the deil in him as keep the deil aff him. Though he be sae like his lady mither, Gude saiv her! there's a gay swap o' the auld burly laird about him, after a'. Ay! my word, sirs, we've whyles heard waur doctrine frae the pulpit than that he gae us even now!" Most of the old men expressed their joy in similar homely phrase on hearing his eloquence so well employed; and had much conversation on the strangeness of men thinking it necessary to drink when they are not thirsty. "Gude be about us," said one, "when a body thinks on't; it is most extraordinary! nane o' us think o' eating, saving at meals, or when we're hungry. But aneth the drink, that's clean a different tale!" Then turning to a youth, who had that in his look which showed he had not let the untasted glass pass his lips, he continued, 'Jock, my man, when ye're dry, I reckon ye'll be for a cog o' water, or whey, or butter-milk, to wet your whistle. But be ye warm or cauld, or sick, or glad, or grieved, or wearied, — hoity toity! then, then it's whiskey, whiskey, whiskey for a', and a' for whiskey! Now, my lad for which o' a' these heavy reasons did you and your friend Tam, down by in the Calf's-house, puir chiel! consider yourselfs obligated to swallow sae mony doses o' this potent drug?" But the chap, who was his nephew, turned sulkily away, and left the old man to divert himself and the young ones round him with his jokes. But we gradually began to leave off gibes and jeers, and to talk of the lad the laird had sent off in disgrace.

Simon asked who he was, and learning that he was the son of an old friend, he expressed much concern. "I'm sorry for it! sorry, sorry for it! His honest father was a sober man. Without either jesting on the subject, or taking it in the solemn point of view the laird did, oh, what a fell destroyer the demon of drunkenness is! a body-destroying, life-destroying, soul-destroying engine of Satan! Oh, bairns, bairns! only think of it as

it concerns even *this* world, our mere worldly prosperity and comfort! See how it ruins all! Think of this, lad; when his father's lease is out, who supposes the laird will renew it to *him*, whom he remembers reeling at your dance here, and whom, as a justice of peace, he had to put in confinement? Or, supposing he mends his manners and gets the lease, such is the stigma that sticks to drunkenness, my word for it, he'll need to behave better than others before he fares as well. If his landlord remembers his drunken impertinence to himself, it won't be Tam that gets favour or furtherance for many a day, or I'm mistaken. In every rational person's mind there must remain a lasting distrust of whoever he has seen drunk. For too, too often, even before it becomes a habit, even while people hate it, and hate themselves for it, one drink leads, or, it may be, drives to another, and all drinking leads or drives on to every vice and crime that it is possible for the heart of man to conceive, or the power of man to commit, till at last it lands him, body and soul, in total destruction. It seems to me that drinking lays open the whole inner man to the intrusion of devils, and that, for the time, a man is thoroughly possessed; and before he is again master of his reason, he may have committed deeds from the very mention of which every thought and feeling of his own nature recoils! 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?' Wae's me! many a man has thought this when he was sober, that has had an awful wakening from a drunken dream! Oh, the fearful ending I heard of short syne! Poor, gay, thoughtless Philip." And he stopped. "Who was Philip? who was Philip?" cried two or three voices; "tell us about him, Simon; we like to hear your stories." "Oh, but ye'll no like to hear this one," replied he; "it's a sad story, it cannot divert you, it can only vex." "Ay, but it may be also profitable," said an old man with a gray head that was standing near. "So let us hear it, Maister Simon; wha was this Philip?"

"Philip," said Simon, "was the son of a decent and very sober man, who carried on a small trade in the neighbouring town. He's a seceder, as they call themselves, and very strict in his faith and practice, and he brought up his bairns as well as he could. Philip was his oldest, a very smart, promising boy, and the father laid out all the means he could spare on his education, and, poor man! many a day pinched himself of comforts to make it the best! It seemed to be all well bestowed; for though a thoughtless, heedless thing, and wild after his play and his companions, he did not appear to have one ill disposition, and took in his learning as fast as they could give it him. It was the pride and joy of his poor father and mother's hearts to see his progress, and to see how he won the good-will of all that knew him. Wae's me! maybe they overlooked as but a wee fault in their favourite bairn, his reckless, restless love of play and companions, of whatever sort came in his way.

"They who have this desire for company have much need to be cautious how they choose their intimates; for it is impossible for any man, even the wisest, to say how he may be led astray by companionship. What then is the hazard to a careless, inexperienced lad?" "Och, but that is true!" said the same old man; "that is very true, and you young anes, lay it to a' your hearts, baith lads and lasses, and remember't. I've been threescore and ten years lookin' about me in this world, and as far as ever I could see, the biggest half-o' a' the various evils in't, has had their beginnin' in keepin' o' bad company. We're prone to that which is evil, and oh, sirs, we hae little need to rin oursel's in the way of temptation and wicked example!"

"I fear," said Simon, "Philip's parents did not think enough of this. He seemed to be the leader of the half of the school. I dare say they thought he could n't be misled. He soon grew a big lad, and they kent na weel what to do with him; but in the mean time, till something should cast up,

he opened a small day-school for reading and writing. He also taught arithmetic, and his success was far greater than he could have looked for. So that, in a short time, he was able not only to assist his parents, but to pay for additional branches of education to himself, such as Latin and mathematics, to make him fit for some higher employment. About that time the school belonging to the seceder's congregation became vacant by the death of their teacher; and their clergyman, who had it in charge to look for another, knowing Philip's general character for worth and abilities, came several times to his school, and was so struck with his excellent management and method of teaching, that by his recommendation the congregational school was given to him. He was also chosen to succeed his predecessor as session-clerk and precentor, for, wae's me, he sung beautifully, and that was one unfailing cause of his being sought after and tempted out, even when he might be inclined to stay at home. The salaries and perquisites of the three appointments were very considerable, independent of his scholars.

"Fancy, if you can, Philip's joy, or the joy of his parents! His poor mother wept for joy as she kissed his high fair brow that proud and happy day—wept like a child, poor woman! the first day of his wealth, and almost the last of his happiness or virtue. Hitherto his love of good fellowship had never led him into dissipation, both because he abhorred the very thoughts of it, and because he had not the means.

"That evening he met with some of his acquaintances who wished him joy of his good luck; and insisted on adjourning to the public-house to drink success to him. Philip started at the proposal, and began to object; but they reminded him of his good fortune, and fearing they might think him or call him scrubbish, he reluctantly complied, and went, resolved to come away early. Ah! my children, 'watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation!' Vain are your good resolutions,—vain, lighter than vanity,—chaff before the wind, when exposed to the infections of bad example, near to which you have madly dared to approach. Philip was open, and honest, and gay; he said nothing that he did not think; he praised nothing that he did not admire, so he believed what all his companions said; they all sung, and laughed, and joked, and drank; but whose songs were so *glorious*, whose jokes were so *glorious* as Philip's! They roared, they shrieked, they clapped their hands as they echoed over the last words of Philip's last joke; for Philip was now rich! and was intoxicated with admiration and applause, long before his brain was intoxicated with whiskey. Every thing, but the present enjoyment, was forgotten. And, next morning, he awoke with a fevered frame, and a heart wrung by the conviction that he must have been carried home worse than a beast,—a mere offensive insensible clod of breathing clay! He feared to meet his father and mother. Poor people! they scarcely knew what to do; but persuading themselves that as it was his first error, and perhaps excusable, all things considered, they did nothing, said nothing: they saw his shame, and seemed as if they knew nothing of what had happened. Poor people, they thought they were doing right! alas, alas, how blind we all are, especially when such cases are our own! had they powerfully held up to him the greatness of his crime, and with all the might of religious and parental authority, warned him of the fearful, fatal consequences, it might have hindered him entering on the polluted path of guilt; but they did not!

"I cannot, my dears, trace to you his fateful course! it was very rapid. Ever resolving that this evening, or that, should be the last, he afforded another proof to the thousands and thousands daily occurring in the world,—that the way to hell is paved with good resolutions. It is an old saying, but fatally true, and so poor Philip found it. Few, I dare believe, are so callous as determine that they *will* be wicked and defy eternal punishment.

Most bad men, I dare say, have some crude intentions of becoming good before they die; and hopes of, somehow or other, escaping hell, or even of getting heaven in reversion. Philip, you see, did more; he was firmly resolved to be good, as soon as the next jolly meeting was over! Alas, alas! his course was very rapid.

"From drinking at night, he soon came to have his dram in the morning, to relieve the bodily sufferings ever produced by excess. This consequently unfitted him for the duties of his school. The minister, the managers, all who loved him, and they were many, talked to him, exhorted him, and warned him, and found him always civil, always repentant, always resolved to abjure this bane of human life. All came to nothing, and he was turned out of his school, just about the time his health gave way.

"See him, then, once more upon the world, not as once he was, happy, healthy, virtuous, and esteemed; but wretched, diseased, vicious, and disgraced. Loaded with debt he knew not how to pay; without one true friend; no one to whom he durst apply for assistance or advice. He tried many schemes, but all failed; for in all places and at all times the demon of drunkenness pursued and blasted him.

"At last, to escape the terrors of a jail, he absconded in the night to Glasgow, and enlisted with a recruiting party, who were on the eve of marching to head quarters. Philip had made but an unhappy choice for a drunkard who is not determined to reform, as intoxication is severely prohibited in our army. His bounty money had unhappily once more put the means in his power, and he had not been ten days with the regiment, till he was several times severely punished for the offence. His temper, naturally fiery and proud, and exasperated by the liquid flame he was constantly pouring upon it, was worked up almost to madness by this disgrace, and in his heart he deeply vowed vengeance against the sergeant, whom he unjustly suspected as the cause of procuring him such unwelcome discipline. One morning he came drunk to parade, blundered in his exercise, reeled out of the ranks, and tramping on his neighbour's toes, occasioned such confusion, that the sergeant seized him by the collar to thrust him aside. Rage and the fumes of raw spirits combined to madden wretched Philip. He drew his bayonet and stabbed the poor sergeant, who fell. Philip was instantly secured and carried to prison. In a few days he was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be hanged for attempting the life of his superior.

"What, think you, were then the goadings of his awakened conscience as he lay on his straw pallet, in the fearful silence and solitude of a condemned cell? How often did the faces of his poor father and mother rise before him, as they shone on him in the days of his virtue. Oh, they rose, in horrible contrast to the state of unuttered — unutterable wretchedness, to which he had now reduced them!" — "But was he hanged?" interrupted one of the young people eagerly. "No," said Simon, "he caught the infection of small-pox, no one knew how, and after exquisite sufferings, died in jail in the thirtieth year of his age. Cut down in the full career of unrepented crime — taken away to stand before his Maker and his Judge."

Simon's powerful voice faltered as he uttered these awful words; and a pause ensued — till the old gray-headed man asked, "And what, Maister Simon, what came o' his father and mother?" "His mother," replied Simon, "on hearing of the fate of her miserable son, was struck with dumb palsy, which soon closed her account with this world. His father — but you are a father — need I tell you *his* state, *his* thoughts, or *his* feelings? Poor old man — he still remains. Neither need I tell you, young people; for ill are you yet able to conceive the pangs of a parent's heart under such a woe. But if you would spare the kind hearts of those, your best — your fondest — earliest — truest friends, the bitter agonies with which wretched Philip repaid his parents for their cares, and toils, and anxieties, and ceaseless love;

say, more than that, if you would spare *yourselves* the pangs of wrung, and broken, and withered hearts — if ever you are fathers and mothers — oh! boys, boys, and you too, my pretty maids, beware of lightly receiving or daring to neglect the counsel of your parents; tremble to give them *cause* of pain or sorrow, in case, through the misdeeds of your own children, the Lord should pay you back for the ills or griefs you inflict upon them!"

A DRUNKARD REFORMED BY A PET GOAT.

NEXT day, as we were quietly trudging along, my thoughts insensibly turned to the scene of the preceding evening, and the lamentable fate of poor unhappy Philip. At last I said, "Simon, did you ever know an established drunkard cured of the habit?" "Yes," he slowly replied, after a pause, and with a peculiar deliberateness in his voice; "yes, I have; but it has been very, very seldom. It is a sore task to conquer such a habit; a task far too sore for the unassisted strength of man; and can only be accomplished by a strong and determined resolution, aided by prayers to God and our Saviour for help, — those earnest, sincere, and persevering prayers which the repentant and returning sinner never yet offered up in vain. In all evil habits, especially in that of drinking, the first struggle against them is the worst. For there is not only the habit of the mind to be conquered, but the habit of the body. The whole frame of a man becomes weakened. He cannot eat, or hold his hand steady, till he has thrown into his diseased and vitiated stomach a dose of the same devil's elixir that has caused his ruin. This fallacious stimulus has *for a time* the desired effect; there is a short-lived artificial spring given to his poor, dozed, worn-out nerves. While this lasts, his hand becomes steady, and the unhappy wretch in his own mind commends the life-reviving powers of the enemy that is sapping and mining the very springs of existence. In a few hours, all his miserable feelings return, and with them all his miserable cravings — again to be relieved by the same deadly means, till at length some terrible or loathsome disease carries him off to his last and long account. It is the observation of all medical men, that the diseases and accidents of drunkards are far more painful and difficult to cure than any others. And can it be wondered at, that flesh and blood completely impregnated with alcohol should be more apt to become inflamed with fever, than that which is nourished by the natural food and drink of man.

"It is a continual affliction to me in my journeyings to see how prevalent this detestable and degrading vice has become amongst us, both in country and town. Oh! it grieves my very soul, to see a peasantry, in many respects considered superior to those of other countries, debasing themselves below the level of the beasts, and condemning themselves and their families to grovel for ever in the lowest rank, instead of rising to the highest, — which every day's experience shows us may be done by those who preserve their virtue, exert their talents, and employ their means with wisdom and assiduity, — those very means which they squander to purchase — what? — the ruin of body and soul — misery on earth, and damnation in eternity.

"We foolishly call this odious polluting vice *bestly*. It no doubt lays immortal man lower than the beasts; but it is slandering the beasts; it would be slandering a sow to compare her to a drunkard." "Oh, Simon, how true that is! Who ever heard of a beast making itself drunk? though, indeed, I well remember once, when I was a little restless imp, on a new-year's day morning, of filling an old wife's cat foun. It took no little trouble, and I got two or three scarts before I got it over poor pussie's throat,

and sick and sore it made her; but, ever after, if she but smelt drink about the house, she was out at the door like a shot; and never would enter it till she opined the coast was clear of what had once spoiled her stomach; an example worthy the imitation of many who think themselves her betters."

Simon, after laughing heartily, said, "That brings to my mind a circumstance which occurred a few years ago in one of the towns I often visit, and of which I was partly a witness: There was a blacksmith, a very clever fellow, who had an excellent business, and could make by it just what he pleased; but, like many others, he could not keep himself well when he was well, but, straightway he fell to drinking. Until then he had been a kind father and an affectionate husband, and liked to see his wife and children well fed and well clothed; but how can a man, who has with his own hands destroyed his reason, and set a fire raging through his veins, answer for what he will do, or will not do? While he was drinking or drunk, the work was at a stand; the smithy door locked or open, as chance directed; his tools and materials, articles left for repair, every thing it contained, at the mercy of whoever chose to go in to steal or destroy. He burned one horse's foot, run a nail through another, pared a third to the quick, and, in short, lamed and tortured many a worthy animal far more respectable than himself. Such things soon met their reward. His customers, some in wrath, some with regret, all left him, and got their work done elsewhere. Of course, poverty followed, and that did not either improve his temper, or make him the less outrageous for drink. When he went home, hungry and greeting bairns met him there, and also a sad and often an angry wife, who had no food to give either to him or them. Knowing and feeling in every fibre of his heart and conscience that he had been acting like a monster, of necessity he was furious at her, and often concluded his visit to his own house by beating with his great forehammer fists the good and respectable woman so beloved in the days of his well-doing.

"It happened that he had a tame goat which was very fond of him, and, drunk or sober, it trotted at his heels wherever he went. If he sat in a public house, so did it. If he lay all night in the street or on a stair-head, as the poor lost wretch often did, there too was faithful Nanny creeping close to him, and many thought that it was the heat of the poor dumb animal that kept the life in John when incapable of either knowing or feeling that he was about to perish. Well, it so happened one morning that John could get nobody to take a gill with him; he asked one and another, but they all refused; and it must be confessed that, by that time, his appearance was not a particular recommendation to the practice he pursued. He cursed them with all his might; and, in a pet, said to his goat, 'Come, Nanny, come awa, since nane else will drink wi' me, ne'er a bit do I care, my wee faithfu' Nan, thou shalt do't.' And going into the public house, he got his gill, and offered some to the goat, which, to be sure, the goat would not take. 'What the devil, Nan,' said he, 'aye! and thou's gaun to do like the lave o' them, and a' sorrow to thee! Na, na, mistress, come here wi' you, gie's nane o' thae airs;' and seizing the poor beast, he poured the whiskey over its throat. This cruel trick was followed by snorting, stamping, butting, and every other expression of its anger; but in a short time it began to reel, and stagger, and fall, and John roared with rapture at the glorious exploit of making the goat drunk, and looked to it as a boundless source of future diversion. Next morning, according to custom, he repaired to the same whiskey-house, and the goat at his heels, but it stopped at the outside of the door, and farther it would not budge; no, not for all that John could do. 'What's this for, Nan! what the sorrow ails tu, that thou'll no come in?' said he. 'D'ye na see! it's because ye filled her fou yesterday,' quoth the fat landlady. John was smitten to the heart, and let go the goat. After standing a moment, he silently turned from the door with his conscience

roused from its torpor, and armed against him with a thousand daggers. 'Am I reprieved,' said he to himself, 'me, made after the image of the living God, am I reprieved in my evil ways by a pair dumb beast! a creature to which he has denied that reason which I have so brutally abused! Reason granted me for a light to guide myself in fulfilling my ain duty, — my duty to my poor, ill-requited, faithful wife, — and my unhappy bairns, to whom I hae set sic an awfu' example, — my duty to God, the great God I have offended, — Oh, how have I worshipped him on this earth. — Oh, Oh, how have I been preparing my guilty soul for death, and the awful judgment that follows death, or the awful eternity that follows judgment!'

"He went home to his bed, silent and conscience-stricken: there he lay for two days without food or drink; in agonies of deep and fervent prayer to God and his Redeemer, confessing his sins, and imploring grace and mercy to help him to forsake them: and his prayers were heard. Next morning he rose and went to his work. He trembled at the sight of a whiskey-house, and watched and prayed that he might be preserved from the temptation. He was found steadily at his work; no longer a reeling, red-nosed, ragged blackguard, blustering and swearing, worse than any heathen, but 'clothed and in his right mind.' In a short time his business returned, his health became good, his spirits good, he had peace in his heart and peace in his home, and penury and poverty and weeping and gloom had disappeared. His children were no longer afraid of him, and he felt the same affection for them and their mother as ever he did.

"It was himself told me, and to tell you the truth, it made me almost greet with joy to see the blessed change in his house. His bairnies, instead of lean, yellow, ragged, and miserable little wretches, were fat, and rosy, and merry. And his poor wife, I may truly say, 'she sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart' the first time I called after his restoration. And I must not forget to tell you a fact worth knowing, which John mentioned to me. At first when he forsook his bad habits, he used to feel the most intolerable gnawings and cravings for drink when he went out in the mornings. But the moment his wife was aware of this, her love and good sense devised a remedy; and she had always ready for him, before he left the house, a bowl of excellent warm gruel, which had the most comforting effect upon his stomach, and prevented those wretched feelings. 'And when,' said he, 'I found the devil at work, putting thoughts of whiskey in my head, I struggled to banish them by every means, especially by trying to pray to my dear Saviour, who knows what sore temptation is. I thought on the Bible, and tried to remember and repeat bits o' it. I tried every thing, whiles I roared and sang, keepin' time wi' the heavy bangs and clinks o' my hammer; so that if any body saw me they couldna but think that I was working for bare life, or, at the least, for a wager. That struggle's owre lang syne, and now I have not the least desire for drink.'"

ORPHAN HARRY.

SIMON and I continued to converse long, and to conjecture much and fruitlessly as to what could be the causes of the shocking prevalence of drunkenness in this civilized and Christian country. Much that had been said and much that had been written we discussed, and ended as we began by confessing it was all utterly unsatisfactory. It could not be from the coldness, or rawness, or dampness of the climate, for people drank as much when it was hot and dry; it could not be from heat, for they drank as much when it was cold; moreover, thousands, like Simon and me, never drink at all, and were as strong and healthy, not to say more strong and more

healthy, than the strongest patrons of whiskey, whether they drank much or little. "I would say," continued Simon, "as was said by our Lord of another vice, 'Drink not at all, for whatever is more than needful to quench natural thirst, tends to and too often ends in evil.'" After a long pause he startled me by exclaiming, "Oh, misery! misery! when I think what miseries flow from drinking! Not only habitual drunkenness, but often from one fatal drink! Oh, there was such a misery happened in a district through which I pass often; but this was a number of years ago. Oh! it was so dreadful, I will tell you to relieve my mind, otherwise it will haunt me for a month. On the afternoon of a fair-day in a neighbouring town, a very fine young man, who had been about a year married, was in his shop whistling at his work, and his wife beside him, when a lad, ranting and rioting, full of whiskey, passed by. As he passed the open window of the shop, he looked in, and with wild shouts roared out a curse on those within it, for not being at the fair. 'D—n you, Harry, you woodlouse, standin' sawin' and planin' there like a spiritless slave as you are, to please your wife, ye henpecked son of a gun. I'll gun you. I'll shute you baith, ye fire-side vermin.' At the instant, snatching a pistol from the pocket of a companion at his side, as he roared, 'Present, fire,' he shot poor Harry through the heart, while calling to him 'hold, hold;' and before the owner of the pistol could do more than seize his arm, the only effect of which was that the shot pierced poor Harry instead of his wife, at whom he had pointed, with one short cry of 'Oh, my love,' he fell, stretching out his arms to enclose his wife, and expired.

"Oh, the unnumbered murders committed in this way," continued Simon, after a pause. "What is it to those that suffer, that, in the language of the newspapers, an unfeeling fool or drunkard presents fire-arms, '*not suspecting them to be loaded*'? How dares any one meddle with fire-arms which do not belong to them? Oh, I wish the legislature would lay a heavy penalty on the bare act of presenting a gun or pistol, whether loaded or not; but when death ensues upon such an offence, surely it should be made felony, and if the murderer is not hanged, he ought at least to be sent into banishment!" "And the unhappy wife?" said I. "She was carried from the dead body of her husband in strong convulsions, in which state she was delivered of a boy,—poor little child, born an orphan! She became quite sensible for a short time before she expired. She was told that her infant was born, and was well, and she asked to see it. Her mother held it to her, and she looked at it for a while in perfect silence, then kissing its tender velvet cheek, she said, 'My little Harry!' in such a voice as made tears gush from all who were standing by. Then raising her eyes to her wretched mother's face, she continued, 'Mother, mother, mother, dear faithful mother! you will take care of my orphan!'—She closed her eyes, and never opened them again.

"The two poor young creatures were laid together in one coffin, and carried to their untimely grave, amidst the sincere grief of the whole neighbourhood. Every man and boy solemnly attended the funeral to the church-yard, and all the women and children stood in silent sorrow, and shedding many a tear as the mournful procession passed along.

"The little infant then became an object of universal interest, and as it grew, of universal love. He was the loveliest, most engaging child, that it was possible to see,—always smiling, always sweet. Willing to stay anywhere, and with any one, and willing to go and stay with any one, all in the same placid spirit of perfect good humour. He seemed to love whatever he looked upon, and every creature, the very dogs and cats, all loved him. His poor grandmother used to look sadly and ominously on the beautiful boy as he grew up, and often would say, while she clasped him and sobbed on him, 'My blessed lamb! my sweet lamb! ye're owre

sweet, ye're owre saft and gentle for this evil world! — Oh, bairn, ye're owre like your blessed mother! wae's me, wae's me! I wish ye had a will o' your ain! Ochon, ochon! for every wrêch will be able to deceive, and mislead, and cheat, and ruin my innocent, gentle lamb!" He would work whole days beside his grandmother, doing with her and for her whatever she required, — whistling or singing like a young seraph, as if he had or wished no other joy. He would have been thought effeminate or spiritless, but he was fearless and brave in any danger, and was not only the best scholar with least trouble in all the school, but he had the most wit and fun, and was the best at every play and every exercise, — the best runner, swimmer, and angler, the best singer and whistler, — in short, the best every thing; for whatever he tried, he could do, as it seemed, without needing to learn or practise, and without appearing to care whether he did it or not. Wherever he was, there he would stay; whatever he was doing, that he would continue to do, as long as others wished it!

"He grew to manhood unchanged except in stature and strength, — his disposition the same. There was a perpetual sunshine in his soul, a light that shone through his beautiful, dark, deep-set eyes, illuminating his whole countenance, and even those he looked at, with the brightness of joy and love. His hair was dark and curly, his very hair and whiskers were beautiful," said Simon, with emphasis and agitation in his voice. I looked round and observed his eyes swimming with tears, but he went on; "I ne'er shall look upon his like again on earth!"

"You need not doubt that Harry was the love of many a lass, but, sooth to say, what with the sad tragedy of his birth, and his own delightful disposition, Harry was an object of love to mothers as well as daughters; for every man, woman, and child, young and old, rich and poor, within the parish and far beyond it, doted upon him. At length, much to his worthy grandmother's satisfaction, he married a sensible, clever, active girl, and they took a cottage at a distance from the village, with a little garden, potato-ground, and a pasture-field for their cow. He had been taught shoe-making by his grandfather, and as he made shoes to perfection, he was sure of constant employment during every minute he could spare from his wee garden and farm. There, his excellent little wife brought him two fine healthy children; and, you will guess that Harry, who loved so many and so much, did not love them and their mother little! Time slipped away sweetly and blessedly; and, a third time, his wife was about to add to their family. At the first symptom of her requiring assistance, he mounted an old horse of his grandfather's that grazed beside their cow. It was a bitter frosty day. Unhappily, the horse cast a shoe before he reached the town, and began to go lame. So, he dismounted till he came to a smithy, where, the instant he entered, he was hailed by a dozen of men and lads whom the frost and coming snow had forced from their work. They had not seen him for months — him, their joy at all times — but in a time like this! They shouted in triumph over frost and snow, and almost hugged him in their joy. He told them his errand, and bade the smith make haste; the very errand was a cause for rejoicing; they must drink to the wife's safety, while John shod the nag; and into the house they went careering like mad cattle. John kept a toll-bar and a public house, and was therefore particularly deliberate in shoeing and frosting the horse, and was in no particular haste to tell them when all was done. And, my dear fellow, I do n't pretend to tell the particulars of what went on among the madmen, once set down to their devil's elixir — but, O God, — O great God! help us, — oh, ever help us to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation! for, the first step taken, what mortal power of foresight can see or conceive when or to what it may lead us! The news of Harry's being in the toll-house spread like wildfire among the numerous work-people thrown idle by the setting in of a snow-storm,

and one set after another came scouring along to see him, to hear him, to rejoice with him, the end and aim of each successive squad being to keep him so far intoxicated as to make him unconscious of the lapse of time. The rest is all unknown, till Harry, wakening from a sleep, of what length he did not know, and looking round him, wondered where he was. Confused and troubled, with throbbing temples and a load on his heart, he struggled to recall the past, but in vain. He saw that his clothes were on, and saw his own cap and great-coat hanging on the wall. A cold horror came creeping over him, and his ears began to ring; he looked to the window, saw the snow — saw the smithy — and instantly the whole truth burst into his mind; he sprung out of the room, calling out, What day is this? — and a knell like death struck his heart when he found that one whole day had past — that this was the *third* since he left his wife. He mounted his horse in silent agony, and with the speed of phrensy rode to the house of the midwife, who came at his call; but her consternation and terror were boundless when she found it was the day before yesterday he had been sent for her.

“They may imagine, who are able, the state of mind in which these four miles were repassed; I confess it is far, far beyond my power! As they approached the cottage, no smoke was in the chimney, no footmarks in the snow — the cow pushed her head from under a shed, and lowed to them. When they reached the snowed-up door, Harry, palsied by the unutterable agonies of despair, was unable to open it. The woman forced her way in, and he reeled after her. All was sepulchral silence. The two children were lying dead on the floor, and their mother and her unborn infant dead in the bed! It were in vain to attempt to trace particulars — but it would seem that she had not, *previously*, sent for any friend to be with her, calculating no doubt, on Harry’s return in two hours at farthest: when he was to go with the horse and bring her own mother to take care of her house. Perhaps, she had soon become very ill and unable to rise, for the children had obviously died of hunger and cold; which, had it been possible for her to leave her bed, could not have been the case, for every thing needful for comfort was found in the house, carefully stored by the poor young creature, though all beyond the reach of the little famishing innocents. However, this is but conjecture; the black seal of death had for ever shut up the awful realities from human knowledge. Harry fell across the bed at his wife’s feet, and there he lay. When it was necessary to prepare the three corpses for burial, he was lifted up insensible, and laid on the floor on a mat. He neither spoke, nor moved, nor opened his eyes. His poor grandmother, on the first incredible rumour of these horrible events reaching her, came hurrying through the snow, to ascertain the truth; and, woe’s me, as sometimes does happen, she found the truth more awful than anything report had made it. There was a revulsion of feeling towards Harry, excited by what had happened: people loathed him, no one spoke to him or of him, or seemed to acknowledge his existence. His grandmother could not wonder at this, nor blame it. ‘Wae’s me, wae’s me,’ she groaned to herself, ‘how many and sore troubles Infinite Wisdom has seen meet to lay on my poor auld heart, but this is the sorest of a.’ The deadly chill that so suddenly froze up all other hearts against him, only swept more irresistibly towards him the whole tide of deep and agonizing feelings in the kind old heart of his dear faithful grandmother. She groaned, and wept, and kissed his cold damp brow, and pressed and clasped to her breast his cold clammy hand. A doctor was got; whether he was fit for his business or not, I cannot tell, but nothing effectual was done. She thought he knew her, and that he returned the pressure of her hand. She tried to warm him, for he was cold, cold — even at his heart, all was cold and still. She attempted to put a cordial into his mouth, but his lips suddenly closed as with a spasm, and there

was a momentary contraction on his fair and unruffled brow. 'Oh, Lord, pity me!' she cried, 'my poor bairn will starve, he'll starve to death, my poor unhappy bairn! Ochoon, ochon, wha could be sae savage as wish him to live? Wae's me for the unheard-of meesery that wrings sic words frae my blighted heart! My gentle, blessed boy! He's gaun, like his mother, wi' his puir young heart crushed and broken!' and she burst into a fit of uncontrollable sobbing and tears. She felt a sensible pressure from the hand she held; and as he fetched a deep loud breath, he opened his dark eyes full upon her. His mouth fell open with a convulsive gasp, and his gentle spirit passed away."

THE IDIOT BOY.

ONE fine summer day, as we were leaving one of the beautiful little towns on the banks of the Clyde—we were suddenly startled by a wild halloo, accompanied with shrieks, yells, rattling of chains, and, in horrid discordance with these, violent peals of laughter. While wondering what might be the cause of such strange sounds, and hurrying on to discover, a lad about fourteen, his clothes all disordered, his long yellow hair streaming behind, his eyes starting from their sockets, and all his other features and ghastly face distorted by the very agony of terror—rushed round a corner which had interrupted our view. He flew past us without seeming conscious we were there, and behind him appeared a man, with a horse-whip in his hand, who ceased running when he saw us so near; and laying his hands on his sides, burst into a tornado of laughing. "What's all this?" cried Simon, "what's this? What has the lad done who is in such a fright there? I see he has fallen down." "Oh, him do! puir devil," said the fellow, "he has done naething; it's but Willie, the widow woman's daft son. She sends him out in a sunny day to divert himself on the road-sides, and it's sic fun to fear him! I hae but to gie a rowt and jingle my horse graith, or crack my whup at his lug, when off he sets skirlin and scrieghin like mad. He was gatherin' bits o' dirt of flowers in the hedge, there, when I got sight o' him, and I've had rare fun." "You infernal villain," cried Simon, thrown quite out of his usual mild temper—"you infernal cowardly fiend!" he repeated, at the same instant seizing the fellow's formidable whip, and with all the energy of passion and all the science of the most experienced wagoner, he laid whack after whack on the carter's legs and thighs—who, after the first instant of stupefaction, sprung to a short distance, uttering the most horrible execrations. "Take that, and that, and that, to stop your jaw," cried Simon, darting towards him and smacking the long, sharp, well-knotted lash across his mouth, jaws, and cheeks. "You detestable disgrace to the name of man! You inhuman coward, that dares to make your savage sport of a poor, harmless boy,—a widow's son—whom it has pleased God to afflict with the greatest earthly calamity." "What ill was I doin' him?" cried the fellow, somewhat lowered in his tone, and wiping the blood which trickled from his cheeks and lips, "was I gaun to hurt him, think ye? I ne'er struck him but ance—a bit slash wi' my whip there—that ye've abused me wi'—and a deevil to ye. I was but makin' a din to fear him, and see how he would rin and squeel;—and my word for't, I'll gar you pay sweetly for attackin' me in sic a gate!" "You'll make me pay for it!" said Simon, taking the horse by the halter which was standing with a cart of stones from an adjoining quarry,— "here goes your horse and cart in the mean while, which I take this instant in pawn to the magistrates—and follow me, if you dare! But you dare not, you coward, you!" he added, looking over his shoulder,— "the wretch who

can use his strength and power to torment and terrify the widow and the orphan, and him that has none to help him, has a heart as cowardly as it is wicked and cruel. — But come, I say — come, if ye dare!" The fellow muttered and swore, but did not stir.

As we got to the place where the boy had fallen down, his poor mother and some other women had gathered round him. He had vomited blood, and was still under the influence of mortal terror, which the least sound of a man's voice aggravated till he became convulsed. Simon recognised an old friend in his mother; and, in the boy, one who, but a short time before, had been most promising, and most likely to be the pride and the comfort of a parent. "Wae's me, Mary," said he, "this is an awful change, since I saw you and him last!" "Ay!" was all she could utter — as she wrung her hands, and floods of tears gushed over her cheeks. He directed the people to carry the boy out of the way, and lay him into bed; while he proceeded into town with the cart, which he took directly to the town-house, and laid the case before the baillies. He was grieved to find that the culprit was only a servant, and that the cart and horse belonged to his master. However, a warrant was instantly issued for his apprehension, and the proper officers sent off to execute it — but he was nowhere to be found — having absconded at the moment, and never returned.

Meanwhile, Simon went to the first medical man in the place, and told him the state of the poor boy. He watched the doctor's face as he spoke, that he might discover the effect of what he said: — and with much pleasure saw the various changes of his countenance — the fierce flash of his eyes — his bitten under-lip — his exulting "bravo" at the account of the whip exercise — and the glistening tear which he started up to hide, while he carefully polished the crown of his hat with his sleeve — then, dashing his hand across his face, he followed Simon to the street. "So!" said Simon in his heart, "the poor widow and her son may be safely trusted in your hands! — I am much deceived if you won't have plenty of practice, for which, my good doctor, there will be little pay until the Resurrection of the Just."

As they walked along, Simon informed him that the poor boy's father died during his early childhood, and that the unfortunate widow, unexpectedly left in the utmost penury, had, by the most meritorious exertions, not only supported herself and her boy without any parish assistance, but had managed to send him to school, where he learned, with the greatest rapidity, to read, write, and count. She then apprenticed him to a copper-smith, and all seemed to bid fair for a time: the boy spent every moment when away from his work, in reading useful books which he borrowed from every quarter, and had acquired an amazing fund of intelligence, "and was the gayest, wittiest, happiest boy I knew," said Simon; "and what has produced this deplorable change, I cannot tell, for I have not seen him these two years."

When they got to poor Mary's wretched hovel, they found her still weeping in silence over her miserable boy. His eyes were still staring in terror, his voice wild and distracted; and Simon's eyes filled with tears, when he saw the poor thing's hands clenched with a death-grasp round the two bunches of wild flowers he had picked up by the road-side. The widow observed the direction of Simon's eyes, and said, "My puir, harmless, murdered bairn. He was gathering them for his mother — there's the twa jugs o' water he had prepared to set them in." The doctor administered a quieting medicine to both mother and son, and gave directions respecting him until he should return at night. Simon lingered behind to inquire the cause of his present dismal state. "Indeed, Master Simon," said the widow, "that's mair than I can weel tell! Ye left us happy — ye see us now. Soon after ye were here, I noticed Willie no sae gladsome as he went

to be, and when I speered the cause, he told me secretly, that his master, wha had aye drank owre muckle, had o' late gane clean heels owre head wi' drunkenness; that he had left his shop to take care o' itself; and that the customers had carried their custom elsewhere; that the creditors were pouring in their bills, and that aye the nearer he drew to ruin, the harder he drank. The journeymen had, one after another, robbed the shop, as they said, to pay their wages, by carrying awa' whate'er they could get haud o' — and then they gaed aff. My puir callan still lingered on, trying to keep the appearance o' a shop — but the master, if he ever cam' in till 't, sick and sair, and mad wi' drink and vexation, missing a' his customers, and sae muckle o' his goods, and naething in the till — beat and abused him, ca'd him thief, and swore he would hang him for stealing a' that was wanting.

"At last he was made a bankrupt and sent to jail. I canna tell you, Master Simon, how a' this should ha'e ta'en sic an impression on my puir Willie's mind, but he continued harping, harping, that his master had ruined his character, and he never would get another place. He sat thinkin' and moanin' at the fireside, and a' I could say or do, out he wadna gang, for he said a' body wad ca' him a thief. I ha'e little skill, Simon, as ye ken weel; but I did my best to put this daft notion out o' his young head, and maybe, if you, or some other wise body had been here, ye could ha'e persuaded him out o' sic nonsense, — but it pleased the Lord to gi'e me nae power over the evil spirit, and in spite o' a' I could say, in a short time he was clean wud. Maybe, even then, a skilful han' might ha'e led back his reason, — but how could I ask a doctor to come and see him? me that had naething to pay!" "Oh, Mary, Mary," interrupted Simon, "alas, and can you suppose doctors only do good for pay? Oh, if ye had but taken Willie to him that was here just now!" "I was blinded, Simon, I was blinded. I had na trust enough in the Father of the fatherless, that he would put it into their hearts to pity and help the widow and the orphan for his sake! I was owre blate. Maybe I was owre proud to ax a favour — and I'm punished.

"After a while, I thought Willie was wearing better. He spak less; and, though his face grew very wan, and he was sad and whiles grat, it was nae fretsome as his angry look and speech. He gaed out, o' his ain will, and sat among the bits o' trees there on the knowes below the quarry; and when he cam' hame, he wud whiles eat a bit; and began to sleep at night, instead o' raking out and in his bed every twa three minutes, the live-lang night. But, wae's me, maybe I wasna' thankfu' enough, and needed to be sairer tried. I canna tell! but, howsomever, that awfu' man at the quarry got sight o' him; and, for his sport, cam' ahint him slipping, and lashed him wi' his horse-whip, routing and making a fearsome din. Willie cam' fleein' hame wi' the great cruel chield roaring and raging at his heels, and frae that hour, Mr. Simon, my puir bairn's been waur than mad. Wae's me — wae's me, and I'm livin' to tell 't — he's been na better than an idiot!" Here the unhappy mother burst into uncontrollable grief, and sobbed and gasped as if her heart were breaking. Simon could say nothing. He sat silent and sad beside her, till at length she went on, — "But this is not the worst. I see now my bairn must die, and that soon, and, O Simon, Simon!" she cried with passion, lifting up her clasped hands, and her face haggard with the very bitterness of despair, "O Simon, what will become o' him, my precious only bairn — when his soul returns to God who gave it — for, when he takes his furious turns, nae tongue could daur to tell you the awful things he says! the fearful, sinful words o' defiance he utters against his Maker, — so that, night and day, I am in trouble and anguish, and a horrible dread hath overtaken me — for he hath said, 'By your words shall ye be condemned,' and my lost bairn's words are beyond pardon! and who can dwell

with everlasting burnings? It maun be the evil one that speaks through his tongue; for whar could bairn o' mine learn to blaspheme?"

Simon wondered much at finding such strange and groundless fears haunting the miserable mother; but saw in it only one of the diseases of lonely wretchedness—the effects of ignorance and gloomy views of religion on a silent, reserved temper, preying on itself. "When the light which is in us is darkness, how great is that darkness!" He answered her with all his wonted kindness and patience; and, at length, left the poor creature quite satisfied that, though Infinite Wisdom sometimes saw fit to afflict his servants with the loss of reason, that greatest of evils—great crimes only excepted—it was utterly impossible that the just and merciful God could punish anything said or done by one from whom he had taken away the power of distinguishing or choosing between right and wrong, good or evil. After administering something to the widow's necessities, Simon once more visited the doctor; and in the evening we proceeded on the journey so strangely interrupted.

Next time we passed that way, we found that the doctor had not belied Simon's skill in the study of human nature; but, in spite of his faithful, affectionate, and long-continued services, the poor boy died of consumption, the consequence of vomiting so much blood on the day of his last dreadful fright, without for a moment evincing the slightest return of reason; adding one more victim to that wickedest species of sport, and most diabolical abuse of power and reason, the pleasure of triumphing in the pains or terrors of the weak in mind or in body. "Wae's me!" said the lonely widow, after having wept herself into composure, "I'm no the only mother that has had the like misery to dree. Mine's now laid in the peacefu' grave, 'whar the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest;' and his young, pious spirit, so sorely tried and bewildered whan it was in the body, ye have learned me to believe, gude Maister Simon, is safe whar there is nae mair sorrow nor sighing; but, ochonee for them that ha'e still the living sorrow. Puir Widow Torrance's braw bonnie laddie—her auldest bairn, was amang some ither bit thoughtless things, on a Saturday, after the schule skaelt, rinnin' about the braes; and amang ither sports, ye'll no hinder them frae rinnin' amang Rab Shaw's field pease; and, I'se warrant, gin they had na pu'd ony—they at least intended it—when out he flew on them like a tiger. They a' scoured awa' like a wheen wild rabbits at the sight o' a dog, and he catcht nane o' them but wee Johnie Torrance. He roared in the wean's lug like a raging bull, and swore he would rive him in bits, a' the time gieing him a sair threshing; then he trailed him down the brae by the heels, and flang him owre a yett. As soon as the puir thing fand his feet, he ran howlin' and tremblin' as white's a corp to his mother. He fell on the floor the moment it got within the door-stane; but never a word could he speak; and she thought he was witcht or had seen a bogle, till some ither o' the callans cam and tell't what had happened. The puir bairn took a lang and sair fever, which it was thought would either end him or mend him; but it did neither; and there he's livin' still, a sore burthen to his puir mother wi' six ither bairns. He's now a big lad—a helpless, harmless, slaving idiot, that his mother canna keep in the house, and canna bide to ken that he's out o' 't, and that he's the butt o' every idle, wicked wretch's cruel tricks, and gibes, and persecutions, that often send him hame foaming at the mouth wi' wild, ungovernable rage. Lord forgie them! would na a body think they wanted to provoke their Maker to bereave them o' that very reason they mak sic a wanton use o'?" "Most true," said Simon; "but what came of him who abused that poor child so inhumanly?" "He's awa' to his place," she replied. "They say we should speak nae ill o' the dead. If it be sae, I should haud my tongue; for there's naething but ill to speak o' Rab Shaw. An ill husband and an ill father was he; an

ill servant and a waur maister. His abuse o' the pair callant was but like the lave o' his doings. Cruel, unreasonable Satan that he was ; he could fright an honest man's bairn out o' its wits for pu'ing twa three field pease, that would ne'er ha' been kent in the mouth o' the sou they were for feedin' ; but never did he think o' instructing or correcting his ain, tho' they telt fifty lees in the day, tho' they brak a' the gardens in the town and about it in the night, and made themsel's fou as often as they could get drink to swallow." "And what has come of them?" asked Simon. "Oh, Gude kens!" said the widow. "They're a' gane, root and branch; they've perished. 'I looked, but, lo! he was was not; I sought him, but he could not be found.'"

THE UNCONSCIOUS CRIMINAL.

"Or all daring crimes which rational beings madly commit," said Simon, as we walked on our way from this lowly hut, — "certainly the widow is right, — there is none more ominously daring than that of using our reason for the purpose of annoying and exasperating those in whom God has either quenched that light, or seen fit to send into this world without it. Many of the dispensations of Heaven are dark and inscrutable to us ; but it is easy to trace that at least one of the purposes of Infinite Wisdom, in permitting this great calamity, is to teach us humility — to quell within us every emotion of vanity or exultation at the possession of superior talents, or superior powers of any kind, either of mind or body ; by placing before our eyes living and mournful and humiliating instances of our own utter nothingness without Him, through whom alone we possess either life, or reason, or any blessing for a single instant. When such sad examples, instead of having the effect intended, inspire poor blinded wretches with the fiendish desire to abuse a helpless idiot or madman, we cannot doubt that the signal judgments of God will fall upon them ; it may be slow, but, oh ! it will be sure. Sometimes, indeed, the punishment is instantaneous, and inflicted by the very being so much despised ; and there are few people who can't remember to have heard of fatal blows given by idiots wrought into fury by cruelties or pesterings.

"Within my own recollection, a most horrid occurrence took place at a farm not far from this, where a very clever country workman made an annual visit for the purpose of making and mending barrows and harrows, and all other farm tools and utensils. It happened that one of the cottars on the farm, who was constantly employed as a labourer by the farmer, had a very harmless good-natured idiot boy who followed his father daily to his work. This poor innocent being was every year the constant object of the wright's tricks and jokes, some of them cruel enough, and, by the way, it is not enough remembered, that every trick is cruel *which is felt to be so* by those it is practised upon. One hot summer day, after the wright had as usual been exerting his ingenuity pestering the poor boy, and having finished his dinner sooner than the rest of the people, he went into the barn, stretched himself on the floor, and fell asleep. Before the other workmen had left the kitchen, the boy came in chuckling and laughing, and rubbing his hands with the utmost expression of delight. When asked what made him so happy, he said he had been playing John Wright a clever trick. John Wright was always tricking him, now he had tricked John Wright. 'John Wright's sleepin', and I've hidden his head in the barrel of feathers, and when he waukens I'm sure he'll no be able to find it.' A glance at the boy showed his hands bloody, — the people started up, and rushed into the barn, where their worst fears were more than confirmed by

the awful spectacle of the headless body lying in a loch of blood,—the poor creature having, as he said, cut off the unhappy man's head with his own axe, and hid it in a barrel of feathers!"

THE TRYSTING TREE.

JOURNEYING one day along a muirland road not far from Stirling, we passed by a very fine old tree in a field at a short distance. I remarked its beauty, to which Simon assented, but seemed for a while absorbed in recalling recollections associated with it. At last, he said, pausing and looking back on the tree; "That sturdy old plant of other-years, reminds me of an incident which displayed a striking trait of character of the true old Scottish breed. That is, or was, called the Trysting Tree, and there a country lass had consented to meet her sweetheart one winter night to arrange matters for the wedding. The night came, cold and foggy, and the girl, true to her appointment, set off silently in the hopes of being back again before she was missed. It soon came on a heavy fall of snow, and snowed all night. The girl was not to be found; and all the roads round being not only impassable but invisible, from the depth of the drift, a whole week passed before any communication was possible with the neighbouring farms, all which time nothing could be heard of her. At length the news reached her lover, who was lost and bewildered in contending feelings of wonder, fear, and jealousy. On inquiry as to the time when his bride had been last seen, he found it was the night of their assignation and the first of the snow. The Trysting Tree flashed upon his mind, and thither with a sturdy band of volunteer pioneers he bent his course. On reaching the tree they commenced digging all round it, and soon came to a solid hummock. Their spades and shovels were then exchanged for the simple labour of their hands, with which they gathered up and flung out the snow by gowpens, and ere this had been long continued, they succeeded in extricating the very girl exactly eight days from the time she had been buried. You may guess it was a moment of agonizing perturbation which preceded the discovery that she was alive!

"On coming to the tree and not finding her lover there, she drew her plaid tight round her, and sat down to await him. She conjectured that the cold had made her drowsy, and the snow falling thick upon her, when she awoke she was unable to move, and felt herself as if alive in her grave, and cut off from the living world. Her lover was full of sorrow and of explanations. 'If he had but thought she could have ventured out on such a night, he never would have failed to keep his word,' &c. &c. &c. Every young man's mind will suggest the proper thing to be said on the occasion; but Lizzy, who could scarcely be suspected of bestowing any but cold looks at such a time, took no notice of him whatever. The country people who had accompanied him had a supply of cordials, and he was loud and earnest in enjoining them to 'give her something warm instantly;' and a glass of spirits was offered, which she gravely pushed aside. 'Give me a glass of water,' said she; '*it's a cauld heart that canna warm a drink to itself.*'

"Her Joe was ardent in his addresses, but she repulsed him with endless scorn. Whether she ever took a husband or not, I have forgotten, but it is certain she never married him."

THE MARCH OF INTELLECT.

WE had not gone many miles in the same district, when we came to a field where two large trees stood alone on a little stony hillock. Simon looked at them several times as if hesitating to speak. At last he said, "I think trees seem to be my remembrancers this morning. These two trees are now the last living witnesses of a horrid deed, and remind me to be thankful for the improved times in which we live. Blessed be God, the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. Nothing can be more groundless than the murmurs of some people about the change to the worse in the morals, and manners, and laws of our country. They have but to state their cause of complaint in language, and they will generally find the lost advantages they bewail were merely nominal, and that in reality we are richer, live better, and are more free than our forefathers in the wildest days of their freedom, when freedom was but the liberty to do ill, and law the will of the strongest. If eggs and butter, salmon and beef, are six times dearer than they were a century ago, — what of that? Money is ten times more plenty. House rents were then cheap, and a family cost far less to cloed and feed, — but what were the houses, and how were the inhabitants clad and fed? Look to the houses in town and country which were then thought good, and compare them with the houses of the present day for the answer; — and look again how masters, servants, farmers, cottars, mechanics, and labourers live, for another answer. Doubtless, multitudes are reduced to poverty and to beggary — but that is not from being without the means of living, and living well. It is from their own waste and wickedness. They turn the blessings of God into wantonness — their god is their belly. Whatever may be the amount of their weekly earnings, and it is often immense, all is spent in eating and drinking, or, to tell the truth more distinctly, in drunkenness and waste, in a most disgusting mixture of beastly dirt and slovenliness, and equally disgusting and unfit finery and waste; so that, however great their wages may be, it comes all to the same thing in the end. All is spent, nothing laid by for to-morrow, and when sickness or death visits them, they are instantly visited by poverty the most abject; and kirk-sessions, benevolent societies, and the charity of individuals are all laid under taxation to supply their wants. So that, in fact, it is now the frugal, industrious, and sober members of each community who are compelled to support, not the poor and the needy, as those words used to be understood, but the idle, the profligate, and the disaffected. The government, the parliament, the laws, the taxes, are all arraigned as the causes of their want and wo, not their own waste and wickedness; and the king, the nobility, the landholders, the gentry, all who are above them, all who are, from whatever cause, or by whatever efforts or good conduct of their own, their superiors in rank or comfort, are eyed with malice and spite, as if such could not be opulent, or independent, or happy, but from the spoils of the poor! But this is not what I intended to say. I doubt you sometimes think me as profuse of my words as some people are of their means, which ought to keep them in plenty and peace.

"It is always difficult to decide to what degree general immorality and crime are greater in a whole nation at one period than another. Vices change with change of times. There was much strictness of conduct, and unconquerable tenacity in maintaining controversial points and observances in the days that are past — but spiritual pride and obstinacy are not either virtue or religion; and I am not prepared to admit that even those who were most violent and successful in upholding 'the good cause,' as it was called,

were actuated by the spirit and principles of our mild and merciful Saviour — or the religion of love and good will to all mankind which he taught. Neither do I think the illimitable liberality on subjects of religion which actuates the conduct of some in the present day, is to be approved — but I am wandering again, and into a briery thicket! There is little doubt that this nation never was so much cultivated as now, — probably, no nation at any period of the world ever was so much given to reading. A thousand books issue from the press for every one formerly published, and for one reader then there are ten thousand now. I do not say that all these books are good — I know many of them should be burned by the hangman — but thousands are excellent, and written with the best intentions — and many more, though idle and foolish, are not pernicious or immoral. I know this from my constant dealings among booksellers : and there is an absence of vice and filthy language which beautifully distinguishes them from even the very best works of what is called the Augustine Age of Literature in this country — when the greatest and worthiest authors were apt to reprove vice, and enforce good morals, in language for which a book of the present day would be kicked into the fire.”

THE DESERTED COTTAGE.

“BUT here is another ramble out of the straight road, and far away from the subject these two trees brought into my thoughts. The deed that was done in a cottage, the ruins of which I have seen, and which now form that grassy knove round the trees, was connected with such scenes of guilt as must have been disgraceful to any age in which they could have occurred : they are painful to remember, and could give you only pain to hear ; but, to show you the improvement in the times, and in the administration of justice, I will tell you the final catastrophe of a long course of guilt. The cottage which I remember under these two trees, was inhabited by a woman and one child, a girl between four and five years old. Two women, familiarly called Maggy Lamb and Lilly Lowe, who lived on the other side of the wooded hill behind the trees, one night stole into the cottage, and murdered the woman, it was said, from jealousy. The little child, during this horrid transaction, escaped in the dark, and hid herself. When daylight came, the poor little creature ventured out of its concealment ; and finding its wretched mother mangled and dead, it wandered out of the house, and went wailing to the nearest farm, which was not very near, and told the people that Maggy Lamb and Lilly Lowe had killed mammy. Examination of the house proved the fact of the murder, and, on the evidence of the infant, the two women were taken into custody, were tried at the next circuit court at Stirling, and without any witness but this little child, they were both hanged. I know there could be little doubt of their being the murderers ; but in what sort of the present day would any one be condemned and executed on such evidence? The cottage was never again entered by human foot. The clothes, furniture, all that it contained, remained untouched as at the time of the murder. The garden round it also continued in the desolate security of utter abandonment — no one approached it. The surrounding farm after a time was taken, but the plough stopped at the garden fence. Every creature turned with horror from the accursed spot. The bushes and vegetables, which for a time probably continued to bear and to sow themselves, were at last worn out, the house fell down, and the fence disappeared. A new tenant took the farm a few years ago, who, not remembering Maggy Lamb and Lilly Lowe, took the large stones of the house to mend his dikes ; run the plough up to the very edge of the heap of

rubbish, and nothing now remains but the two stately trees to mark the abhorred patch of earth where the deed was done."

BANNOCKBURN.

AFTER walking in silence about a mile, musing on the subjects which the deeds and the fate of those two women gave rise to, we came to a burn running rapidly through the low grounds and overhung by brushwood and alder. Simon suddenly stopped, and turning to me with sparkling eyes, and his whole countenance illuminated, cried, "Do you know what burn that is?" I answered, "No." "Off with your shoes and stockings, lad, and wade across it. It is holy water—it will do your heart good, and your health good, for that is Bannockburn! Poets may write nonsense about the inspiration of muses and of this or that sacred stream, but foul sa' the Scotch heart to which Bannockburn is not a true source of inspiration! It has been thought illiberal of late years to feel or express exultation over the triumphs of our forefathers, and men thinking themselves very wise, very superior, and very genteel, treat with cold scorn the honest pride we feel about battles and victories which took place five hundred years ago. But that is the false philosophy and vain deceit which bewilders men of a certain calibre of intellect, who, thinking themselves wise become fools. That man is neither wise nor good, whatever his talents may be, who does not love his country above every other country, and who would not resist unto death the attempts of any invader to injure her liberty or laws. If our forefathers felt this, who, in comparison of us, had so little to fight for beyond the beloved names of Scotland and home, how much more ought we to feel it who live under laws which secure life, liberty, and justice to the meanest individual.

"It is very true, that instances may occur in which the influence of individuals has perverted the laws and prevented justice taking its rightful course. But it should not be forgotten that such evils are not the fault of the laws, but of the individuals who administer them. No laws can alter the nature of man—prone to that which is evil! No wisdom or foresight merely human, can prevent those getting into power and offices which they may at times abuse, but this does not often happen; the spirit of opposition, and the desire and hope of obtaining such offices, sharpens the observation of those who are not in power, and there are very few offences against the laws and liberty of the country, which are not speedily dragged forth, and placed in the strongest light. And, let us remember, they are all the more conspicuous from being so contrary to the smooth, quiet, equal tenor which law and justice pursue throughout the land, and which passes quite unnoticed as a matter of course—in the same way that the whiter and clearer a sheet is, the more distinctly a few dirty spots are seen. Instead of cavilling and quarrelling with the excellent laws and the government under which we live; instead of neglecting their own duties and their own work, and going roaring and routing and breaking down fences, and terrifying innocent people, bellowing for reform like mad cats, if every man and every woman in the country would begin to reform their own conduct, their own families, and bring up their children as good Christians, to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly and dutifully, each in his own station, there would be little need for any other species of reform—for, I say again, the laws, and the administration of the laws, are good, though fools and knaves may sometimes abuse them. The writings of St. Paul are often enough studied and quoted as authorities for the wildest and most pernicious notions. I many a time wish the talents and attention of our homeless, penniless legislative mechanics—the reformers of church and state, who can't

keep their families in bread, were directed to what he says to those who don't provide for their own, and who can't govern their own households. But such useful, practicable home-duties are far beneath the regard of our whiskey-drinking, pamphlet-reading politicians, big with the fate of empires. In the march of their intellects, all such humble, old-fashioned concerns of men and Christians are trodden under foot. Who could be so irrational as expect a man, whose marching intellect was striding to battle with administration, or the courts of law, or whatever department of the government or laws of God or man, he kindly purposes to exterminate or reform, — to be so mean-spirited as first try "his prentice han'" in attempts to reform himself, or to instruct or guide his children! He is not so low or selfish, as waste his time or care upon either the one or the other. He leaves such pitiful, petty concerns to the free school, or the Sunday school; and if the poor things and their mother should be starving, 'the Benevolent Ladies' will feed them.

"Our brave forefathers, on this very ground over which we are treading, resisted unto blood and death the attempts of England to enslave their country, though, when the truth is known, in this their country, like the commonalty all over the world in those days, and in most countries even in the present day, they were no better than slaves to the nobility and chiefs of the land. Were we the inheritors of their holy spirit of patriotism, how would our hearts burn within us for the maintenance of its glory and honour, now when all the blessings of peace, plenty, and real liberty flourish round us."

WHAT INDUSTRY CAN DO.

AFTER a very long silence, during which Simon seemed to have been pursuing his favourite theme, viz. that it must be by the reformation and virtue of individuals, not by alterations of the laws or the government, that a country — at least a country with such a constitution as ours — must be reformed, he once more began, "We are now coming near to a house where it is my delight to visit. It is one of those which are the very glory of a country; and when I contemplate in it what one woman can do for public and private good, I wonder at the low ambition of that sex who have such power, would they but use it as they ought. Oh, my lad, ye needna be stretching your neck, and glowering from side to side to discover which of these fine houses I am going to. I like the nobles and gentry of the land with all my heart; no man loves or respects them more; and when I hear of the misconduct or the extinction of an ancient or noble name, I feel as if my own heart and flesh were wounded and torn — but the noble house I am going to take you to at present, is that of plain John Turner the weaver. Laugh as ye like, my lad. Ye'll no laugh, at least with scorn, when ye come out of it.

"And here is John Turner's house. Hear, hear, how many looms are clanking! It is refreshing to my soul that sound of honest industry, for here it is unalloyed, untainted by the sad, sickening thoughts which haunt the poisonous giant cotton-factories, — these hot-beds of wealth and wickedness, — but I do n't like to think of them!" We soon came to a clean, comfortable-looking plain house, into which Simon unceremoniously entered, and where we found a large hearty wife with a sunny face. She had one infant in her arms, and two or three clean happy children playing round her. "There she sits, decked round with her second crop of blossoms," cried Simon. "Well, Mrs. Turner, and which of my young friends has given you this new-blown bud to divert you?" "Guess, Simon, guess,"

replied she, "which, think ye, of a' my bairns is this wee bit thing the likest?" "Mary, Mary," he replied, "my old sweetheart, who jilted me some eighteen or twenty years ago." "Ye're no that far wrang," rejoined our hostess, with a most peculiar twinkle of her dark brown eye, "for Mary's this wee thing's granny. Simon held up both of his hands, exclaiming, "they inherit, it seems, all your own fearlessness of the cares and troubles of matrimony! Mary a grandmother, the infant I have so often danced on my loof!" he added, holding out his broad palm. "Very true, Simon, these bits o' creatures mak you and me auld folk! It's nine and thirty years since John and I were married. I was then just seventeen, and John was but little mair; and tho' we've baith o' us had mony a toilsome day, wha is't in this life, Simon, that hasna toilsome days! we were toiling for oursel and our weans; if we had na been married we might baith ha' had to toil for a master, for sma' wages and less thanks. Lord be prais'd for't, we've aye had plenty of plain fare, healthy and weel doing bairns, and I have nae dread o' seeing them marry as soon as they're able to work. The callans, in particular, it keeps them out o' muckle mischief. They're improvident craitures, and never lay by a bawbee for the morn unless they have a hame and a wife to provide for." "And," said Simon, willing to draw on the good woman to give an account of herself, which was no way new to him, "I would like really and truly to know if, in all these hard times which we hear so much about, and which have nearly thrown the half of the kingdom into rebellion,—in all these hard times, had you and your children always enough?" "Weel I wat we had that, enough and to spare, Lord be thankit! When we were married, John was just out o' his 'prenticeship, and worked as a journeyman wi' his master; wages were low, but then things were cheap. He was aye busy, and wasna often idle. What John brought in at the door, I'se warrant you I did na fling out at the window; and before Mary was born, I had mair than ae wab o' my ain spinnin' that he had wrought in a spare loom o' his maister's at his by-hours. We often heard o' want, but, if ye believe me, Simon, want I never felt. And it's my ain opinion, I hope I'm no presumptuous in sayin' 't, if a' folk drank as muckle water, and as little o' any thing else, as John and me does, there would be less want and mair health, less ill blood, and mair contentment heard tell o' in the land.

"I never forget, Simon, the advices I got frae a worthy lady that's now in heaven. When Mary was about a quarter auld, John had saved as muckle o' his wages as enabled him to buy his loom, and the first wab he wrought was for that lady. When it was ready, he got the cast o' a neighbour's cart going to Kellie for seed-corn, and they took me and the bairn wi' them. When the cart stoppit, John gaed in wi' his wab, but I stayed about the door lookin' at every thing, and every thing seemed to me so wonderfu' and so grand! But the lady saw me frae the window, and when she heard that I was John's wife, she sent for me into the house; and she was sae kind, and praised John and the wab and wee Mary sae muckle, that my heart filled quite fu', and I was like to greet wi' joy. After she had paid John, she asked him if he would like to gang into the garden, and he might, maybe, learn something from the gardener, as we had a bit garden behind the house; but she garred me stay beside her, and speer'd at me a' about my management o' my house and wean. She praised my ways o' doing, and said if I went on as I had begun, we were sure to thrive,—but mind ye, said she, a man can only thrive just as lang as his wife will let him. I had heard the saying before, but I had never heeded it till then, tho' mony a mony a time hae I seen the truth o' 't since! She warned me, that blessed lady, against ever running into debt. 'Never buy a thing,' said she, 'if it were but a penny-worth, till you have the money i' your hand to pay it. Do'n't let yourself be tempted with bargains, to

but what you're not in positive need of, and do n't be always running to the market for every thing you may want, till you have tried whether or not you can do without it; and, by the help of your needle and thread, make an old gown or petticoat serve a little longer, and so, let your husband's wages gather. And,' said she, 'never aim at having fine clothes, but rather pride yourself on seeing your husband and your family always clean and never ragged, tho' their clothes should be of the plainest and coarsest sort. Every person knows that workmen and women's clothes should be fit for the work they have to do, and suited to their station as well as to their means. And you may believe my word, that work people cannot make a greater mistake than supposing they make themselves respectable by aping the dress of ladies,—for, on the contrary, they are looked upon with both disgust and ridicule by every right-thinking person of every rank. It is both proper and praiseworthy to endeavour to better our situations and rise in the world, by every rational means;—but it's easy to see that dressing extravagantly, if it's made the first step, will also be the last—and be like putting the key-stone on their poverty for life. She warned me, too, against ever letting tea within my door; and said that, next to whiskey, it was the greatest blight to a poor man's house. She said she could tell a tea-drinking woman, her husband, and her children, by their looks, their rags, and their dirty drookit appearance, the minute she saw them, as easily as she could tell a drunkard.

"Many a good advice she gave me, too, about my bairn. Make her healthy and hardy by washing her night and morning in plenty of cold water—and by letting her run about in all weathers, winter and summer. Never let her disobey you for a moment, and teach her to speak the truth by never speaking anything but truth to her. Never frighten her with worricows or bogles, nor threaten her with frightful or impossible punishments to make her obey you. If she cries perversely, or disobeys you, even infant as she is, now,—tell her you will whip her—and if she persists, give her a sharp slap, to make her really feel you are in earnest; and next time she is disobedient, she will know what you mean when you threaten to whip her;—which, remember, you must never fail to do, if she refuses to obey. Never punish a little innocent for any unintentional accident or fault; or for good-humoured noise or folly suitable to her age; but, on the other hand, never let a lie, or ill-nature, or spite, or cunning, escape. Oh, Simon," continued the sensible, animated woman, now in the full spring-tide of eloquence,—“my very lugs drank in every word that worthy lady said; and I sat, to my ain great shame when I noticed it, wi' baith my een and my mouth wide open listening to her. Muckle she said that I will ne'er forget, but I need na repeat, about the especial need of beginning early, na, as soon as they are born, to teach bairns to be obedient. For if it was not begun early, it would never be begun at all: and if you can't make a six month old baby obey you, how will ye command it when it is six years! and if, said she, the oldest bairn be spoilt, all the lave will be spoilt in spite o' your heart, and with a family of spoilt weans, a poor man's house would aye be poor; and, most likely, both father and sons would rin to the sparrow. Secure your bairns' happiness and your own, said she, by laying in their young hearts the firm foundation of religion. Teach them thankfulness to God for all their mercies, for their health, their sleep, for every meal, for their little pleasures. While the Bible tells you to believe in Christ as the only Saviour, it also tells you to love the Lord with all your heart and mind and strength, and your neighbour as yourself. Teach these great commandments to your children. Never let them be forgotten, and never let them forget that, after serving God and honouring the king, they must love their brethren, and that the end and evidence of all true and acceptable religion is a good life. You know that not he who attends to

forms and ceremonies, and neglects the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy, or he who runs after preachers and preachings, and yet drinks and cheats, or neglects his work or his family, can ever be considered good or religious by God,—but only he who doeth righteousness, showing his faith by his works. So, impress all such useful and important truths on the hearts of your little ones, and, depend upon it, God will bless your pious cares, and bless your children, both in this world and in the world to come. For, has He not said, that altho' he will visit the sins of guilty parents on their children to the third and fourth generation—an awful consideration to you and me!—He will show mercy to *thousands* of them that love him and keep his commandments? That mercy may not be shown in making them rich or great in this world; but to live under the blessing of the Most High is our true wealth and welfare and happiness here, and will be our glory hereafter.

“When I was coming awa', she brought a wee scarlet mantle that her ain bairns had worn, and put it on Mary, and bid God bless her. My very heart was gowpin sae, I was na able to speak ae word, no, not sae much as to say, I thank you! She telt John to mind that the laird, her husband, was a justice o' the peace, and her son a doctor, and if he should hae the misfortune to need the help o' either the taen or the tither, to be sure to let her know. When we got into the cart, we found a great store o' plants and seeds for our wee garden, and a pair o' fowls and a pair o' ducks for mysel'. This, Simon, was the beginning o' our stocking,—that was, indeed, a day I never can forget! I prayed wi' a' my power, to be able to remember and profit by that sweet, lovely lady's counsels, and I humbly presume to think my prayer was heard! John had not been idle in taking up the gardener's lessons, and the man was sae weel pleased wi' his eagerness to learn and hear everything, that he had na been ill-willed to tell him how to manage our yard. I think I hae reason to bless that happy day for anither cause,—it enticed John to work in the open air at every spare minute, and was the means of preserving his health, and as soon as the bairnies grew up a wee, it was a wonder to see how he taught the bits o' things to be usefu'; they could weed, and gather up the trash and withered stalks maist as soon as they could gang; and as I was careful to mak' them obedient, and dutiful, and honest, we could trust them in the garden their lanes among the beans and pease and berries, for they would na touch one unless they were bidden.”

Two o'clock brought the husband of this useful wife, with half a dozen sons and apprentices, to a comfortable substantial dinner, to which we got a hearty welcome. After our cheerful meal, Simon and I accompanied the weaver to his shop, which, with the eight looms it contained, had long been his own property. So also was the house he lived in, and several other houses, each with a garden; and besides all these, a large meadow, where he had several sheep and cows feeding, and ground for potatoes, and lint for the gudewife's webs. It was impossible to look without admiration at this patriarch, not yet sixty years of age, who, on wages at no time exceeding eighteen pence a day, had brought up and established in life fourteen sons and daughters in the greatest respectability, besides accumulating this little estate round his original dwelling. He was a quiet, unpretending, industrious man, with much useful common sense, and no bustle, and who held on his noiseless course of duty with sober perseverance. He spoke little, and seemed much surprised at the admiration I expressed at all I saw, as it were created out of eighteen pence a day. He said it was all, under the blessing of God, owing to his wife, and to the goodness of Heaven in never raising him above the necessity of working, which had preserved his health, and brought him to the age of fifty-seven as strong and active as he was thirty years before.

As this happy family would on no account part with Simon that day, we agreed to remain with them till next morning, and in the course of the evening had much conversation with this excellent wife and mother. We found that all the grown-up sons and daughters were married, much to the satisfaction of their parents. "And how comes it, my good friend," said Simon, "that even in *this* you have been so fortunate; for it is rare indeed to see the whole of so large a family married, and settled, and thriving like yours?" "Oh, Simon," she replied, "ye're no to suppose that I think either my ain bairns or their wives or husbands without faults, or a' exactly as we would wish them. But what then? What are John or me, that we should dare to expect perfection in our bairns, or in any other? No, no! We maun aye bear and forbear in this world, and just strive as seldom as possible to rub any o' them against the grain. When I saw the Lady o' Killie on that blessed day, ane o' the advices she gave me was, to keep my bairns as much under my own eyes as I could, — that, sore torment as it might often be to be deaved wi' their din, it was better to make their father's fireside the place where they enjoyed the most peace and pleasure, than by growling at their innocent frolics and noise to drive them out o' my sight, where I could never know what mischiefs they might work, or what ill companions they might fa' in wi'. I'll no deny, Simon, that mony a time when they were young, and sic a heap o' them, and I was maybe thrang and fashed, and no very weel, I've thought my very head would burst wi' their rippets and daffin'. But I aye keepit in my heart that dear lady's assurance, that I would reap the happy fruits o' my patience when they grew up, — and so it has been! I got acquaint, from their very infancy, wi' a' their different dispositions, and amang a' the fourteen there's no twa like ither, — and I got acquaint wi' the weanies, their bits o' companions, and I only encouraged about the house them that showed gude dispositions, and gude up-bringin'. When John cam hame at e'en, he used often to lay their noise wi' playing on his sma' pipes to them, and whiles they wad dance and whiles they wad sing; and that was a noise ony body could endure. Some o' the callans took to learnin' the pipes and some to the fife, they could a' skirl and play on something, puir wee brats, — gin't were only a trump atween their teeth; and baith lads and lasses could sing. A' that they took frae their father, for I was aye timmer tuned, and ye ne'er heard sic grand concerts as we had in our bit housie. The very minister used to come and hear them, and got Johnnie to be his precentor. So you see, Simon, what was first a sore plague was at last a pleasure, and as I had, just in a quiet way, gradually rid the house o' the nightly visits o' the young crairs that I didna approve o', I was easy in my mind, though I began to see mair than a bairnlike affection growing up amang them that remained. Puir young things! they've a' married as we could have wished, and that has been the reward I received for following good advice, and making my ain fireside comfortable to them a' to the best o' my power." "Well done, thou good and faithful wife and mother!" said Simon, snatching both her hands within his own, while his large, bright, beaming eyes glistened as he spoke. "Well done, well done! you have had ten talents bestowed on you by your Lord, and worthily have you fulfilled your trust! A thousand mothers like you would be greater riches to Britain than ten thousand Wellingtons, or Nelsons, or Chathams, or Willie Pitts, — they can onely, like skilful doctors or surgeons, cure or cut off its diseases, but such mothers as you keep it wholesome and healthy, and sound to the very core. God bless you and spare you! I leave an auld man's heart-warm blessing on the colony ye've planted; and my best wishes and prayer for you, and yours, and my country is, that all the sons and daughters of it, to the latest generations, may be as good, and wise, and useful, as worthy John Turner and his wife!"

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

AFTER leaving this comfortable dwelling, Simon turned round on a little knowe, once more to look on the cluster of neat houses, and gardens, and meadow ground. "How true it is!" said he, "that all is the gift of industry and economy! Industry without economy is a kind of labour in vain. And economy without industry becomes mere wretched penurious scraping and pinching. Here we see them united. John is a man of quiet good sense, but very moderate capacity. Had he married an idle or wasteful woman, he would have toiled and grovelled on as a journeyman all his life, rearing half-fed, half-clad, half-taught dirty brats to drudge and muddle all their days in the lowest class of labourers. But, depend upon it, John's children and grandchildren will rise. You see what an excellent education his eldest son is giving all his children, and the young shop-keeper too who married one of the girls, — what a fine fellow that is. My word for it, John may live to see him provost of Stirling!"

"It is wonderful," continued Simon, "what industry and frugality can effect in retrieving people from the most desperate situations. I remember a soldier's wife and her mother, who came from Ireland, and settled in a small town in this country, where they maintained themselves and two young children by sewing. They were willing to do all sorts of work; but they were unknown strangers, and little employed; so that their principal occupation was making muslin caps, and things of that kind, which the mother carried about for sale. She always brought back the proceeds either in money or in muslins, to supply the means of future industry. In this way, poor as their profits were, by working early and late, they managed to keep themselves out of debt, being contented to live upon simple potatoes and salt, with now and then a halfpenny worth of milk for the children. After a time, the poor mother, by over-fatiguing herself walking under a burning sun to a distant town, in hopes to get her caps sold, was seized with a fever, and laid up among the strangers, unable to move or be moved; and the daughter, after having been nearly delirious with anxiety at her mother's unwonted absence, heard, at last, of her illness, and leaving the eldest child behind her, set off on foot with the other in her arms to wait on the poor old woman. I don't know what time elapsed before it was possible to move her from the place where she lay; what charge was made by the people of the house for board and attendance; how they got home, or any other of the particular miseries they had to encounter. All these, at least in my recollection, were swallowed up in what followed. The poor young woman and her infant were seized with the fever on their return; the mother relapsed; and there they all were, confined in one small bed, within a little airless kitchen, in a close, unwholesome lane, in the very height of an extremely hot summer, with no living creature to look near them but the girl, then about eight-years old. They had led such a quiet, unobtrusive life, and were so little known, that it was long before their situation attracted the attention of the neighbours, or any means were taken for their relief. In the midst of all this misery, the little child was seized with natural small-pox, and the heat and horrors of their situation brought that most dreadful disease to its most loathsome extreme. Many weeks passed away before these poor people were able to leave that dismal bed, and sometimes there was not within their wretched apartment one particle of food, or anything that could be swallowed, except water, which the eldest child brought from the nearest well. When want and wretchedness at last impelled them, in defiance of weakness, out of the pestilential hole

where they had so long lain, they were frequently forced back to it again from too soon exerting their feeble strength in efforts to work. Reduced to utter want, with the heavy burden of a now diseased and wretched child, — with house rent besides smaller debts to pay, — their daily food to supply, with languishing health and broken spirits, — what could be more hopeless than the state of these poor friendless women, so far from their own country and kindred? Yet God did not forsake them. Those who had little to give bestowed what they could to assist them, and sent effectual relief by telling a worthy doctor of their state. Their landlady, herself a poor woman, remitted their half-year's rent. Some benevolent people, who came to the knowledge of their misery, sent them assistance; which, raising them from utter despair, they struggled through and began to recover. Blessed be sober industry! in spite of the sick child, which required constant nursing, in a few months they were able to maintain themselves as before; were always clean and neat; always busy; paid off all their debts; and before the end of a year, were again active, cheerful, and comfortable; though the poor little boy, now three years old, can't yet stand on his feet. It requires little knowledge of the world to be perfectly aware that, under such circumstances, had habits of industry and the principle of honest independence not been strong within these poor Irish women, they must have become wandering beggars for life."

TALENT WITHOUT PRINCIPLE.

As Simon and I stood one day on a solitary road, puzzling over an accident which had befallen his wagon, and defied all our mechanical skill to put to rights, a shabby-looking labourer, with a spade and pick over his shoulder, came slowly plodding from an adjoining field. He stepped as he came up to us; and, on observing Simon, pulled off his bonnet and addressed him, as one acquainted, with a gladdened air and voice. The recognition was mutual; though, judging from Simon's manner, I did not think the pleasure was. "What has come owre ye, sir?" said the man; "nae accident, I hope?" "Indeed, Jacob," said Simon, "a very troublesome one; and how we are to proceed, I cannot tell." "Let's see, sir," said our new friend, heaving the tools from his shoulder; "we'll maybe be able to help it." "No, no," replied Simon, "we can do nothing without a smith — and what's worse to come at — a smithy." "Let's see, sir; it's maybe no sae ill;" and he set to an examination of the broken wheel. "A gay unlucky mischance that, now, after a'," continued he, as he scratched his brow and lip, and still silently pored, and felt and shook the various parts here and there: then he stood looking up, and down, behind and before, as if he was going to lay out the ground, "but troth, sir, I think I'll no let it ding me yet! Hech, sir, we'll try't! Agin I had it but a wee nearer my ain house, I could manage it fine! Ye see, sir, it's a' down hill, and gin ye could lighten't a wee, ye might lead the ponie, and this young gentleman will guide the broken wheel, and I would lay my shoulder to the wagon and bear it up." At this suggestion Simon instantly emptied the cart of its heaviest contents, and as the day was good, left them under the care of our faithful dog upon the road. We then, with far less difficulty than was anticipated, conveyed our precious vehicle to the bottom of the hill.

"Now, sir, a' will soon be right; just bide a wee, and I will soon be back," he cried, as he ran on towards a house at a little distance. "Who on earth is that?" said I. "Jacob Gray," replied Simon, "a clever fellow! one intended for better things than his appearance betokens." "And what has

befallen him?" "A wife," said Simon. "A termagant, I suppose?" "You are out there," he replied, "a termagant might keep at least his body in clean food, and clean clothes, but Sarah does not do that, you may perceive!" "And what wretch is *she*?" "One who *was* most respectable; every member of her father's family is respectable. So also are all of his, all well-doing, all thriving, all but him, in ability the flower of the flock; he never, to appearance, gets his head above waht. He married this precious Sarah, when he ought to have married another woman, but her he deceived and forsook! '*His sin has found him out*' with a vengeance, and, verily, I believe Sarah is his punishment!" "Is it not an odd manoeuvre, stopping us here?" said I, seeing him come loaded from the house. "It is his terror of our seeing Sarah and the house," was Simon's reply. Just then Jacob reached us with a wheel-barrow filled with strange incongruous-looking articles. Having immediately taken off the wheel, and removed the broken ring, he examined, and with Simon's help, speedily repaired the wood-work: then, turning to a niche in the bank by the side of the road, he said, smiling, "I maun now set up my foundry;" and soon making a hot fire with the peats and coals he had brought, by the help of a coarse, but powerful pair of bellows, and an old fifty-six pound weight without the ring, as an anvil,—in an incredibly short time, he had put the whole iron of the wheel in order, had mended and replaced the ring, repaired nails and bolts and screws; put all neatly and strongly together, and restored the wheel to its place! My office had been to blow the bellows; and I looked from my post on all this, with the utmost admiration, and Simon, himself an excellent workman, was much surprised; both of us were very grateful, and much gratified with the success of the job. "Surely, Jacob," said I, "you must have served an apprenticeship to the gipsies!" "Na, sir," he replied, "I had a far better master." "He must have been a clever fellow, indeed!" said I. "At least he has been reputed to mak some clever fellows, sir," he answered, removing his bonnet, and passing his sleeve across his brow, with a most saddened look. "My master, sir, was ane they ca' Necessity, and a gay hard master, I ha'e whiles thought he has been to me, first and last! I ha'e made but little under him yet, for a' he has learned me. — What I might ha'e been without him, I canna tell!" And a bitter look passed over his face for an instant.

The cart being driven back to the spot where it broke down, and all found right and tight, Simon expressed his sincere thankfulness to the poor man in the most gratifying language he could use, and attempted to put a crown into his hand. But he started back, crying, "Pity me, sir! what's that ye would be about? would ye mak a fule o' me a'thegither, sir!" "That would be no easy job," said Simon, laughing; "but I must and cannot but pay you the loss of your time and for your materials; tho' I can not pay our obligation for the very essential service you have done us, when we could not have moved forward or backward another step." "Oh, sir," he replied, "but I am blythe to serve you! Ye canna be half sae glad, or half sae thankful that I was able to do it, as I am, sir, and it was just a cast o' providence that brought me in your gate. Pay my time and my materials! Wae's me, — what's my materials? — just bits o' auld brass or iron, nails and cleeks — or hoops — or teeth of rakes or harrows, and sic like, that no one but myself would see, — gathered up when I'm working or walking, like the skill to mak use o' them, amang ither folk's feet! I ne'er put either the one or the other to better use, and so, sir, fare ye weel, and Gude be wi' you and guide you!" He had resumed his spade and pick while speaking, and before he ended, had flung himself over the ke and hurried away. Simon looked after him with the utmost compassion, saying, "To think how that man is cast away! What a lesson —

what a mournful proof, he affords, of the utter insufficiency of the most useful and varied talents to attain, at least to *preserve*, comfort and respectability. Even in this life, these will not abide with us when the firm groundwork of sound principle, vital religion, and personal virtue are wanting! But he must not go without the reward of this day's good deeds, so kindly and effectually performed," — and going to his goods, he measured off a whole suit of stout blue cloth, and adding a bonnet, stockings, neckcloths, and whatever else occurred to him, we made up a large bundle with which I proceeded to his house.

Its situation was lovely, and every thing showed a capability of its being made a little paradise. But as I approached, this vision vanished — was *expelled* from my mind, by the inconceivable abominations which assailed all my senses. I hastened to knock at the door, which was shut; but no one answering, I lifted the latch and stepped forward to lay down the bundle, when a little lean, miserable-looking woman, with a long skinny neck, tatooed with the bites of ten thousand fleas, came creeping from an inner apartment. Her back was bent, as if with the weight of conscious degradation; her face pushed forward, while, with two long, bony, dirty paws, more resembling the toes and talons of some unclean bird than that beautiful piece of mechanism, the human hand, she grasped (apparently no needless precaution) her tattered petticoats close to her body. "What's your wull, sir? Ye'll be wantin' Jacob, sir? he's no in, sir, — but I'll get him in a minute, sir. Sarah! — Betty! — Jock! — whare are ye? rin every ane o' ye, rin for your father," she yelled forth in a wailing voice that seemed to have forgotten the sounds of joy, and three or four dirty, half-naked, squalid, most piteous-like children came spouting like rabbits out of sundry nooks and holes. I at length got her disastrous offers of service overwhelmed, by the reiterated assurance that I did not want her husband, and laying my hand on the bundle, told her I had brought it for him from Simon Frazer. "Oh, sir! oh, but Mr. Frazer's a kind gentleman! Oh, but he has been the kind friend to Jacob! Mony's the gift he has g'iven to Jacob, sir! Oh, but he is kind."

All this was uttered in the most deplorable voice, like one wailing the dead. Meanwhile I had observed that there were many remains which showed that the house had been, and still was, capable of being made decent. What had evidently been respectable curtains, hung, half covering two beds apparently filled with masses of the most unimaginable dirt and confusion and rubbish. A female dog lay muttering and growling in the midst of a great litter of puppies, and a large sow came grunting from under one of the beds, and was instantly attacked by an exasperated clucking hen, with three or four wretched, lame, dragged chickens, clamouring for food. Among them all, the din was so great, it was impossible to hear. "Oh, ye clatty, noisy, skirling brute!" despairingly squalled this human scarecrow, making an effort to kick the hen, and still gripping her petticoats tight in front. "Pity me! what ill's the puir sow doing you? Oh, sirs! gin ye would but leave in peace, ye wile ill-natured brute, and let the puir sow alane!"

The state of the floor on which all this was transacted, *perhaps*, may be imagined, it cannot be described; and probably nothing contributed more to the desolation the whole exhibited, than a chest of mahogany drawers which retained marks of the most beautiful workmanship, with most of the handles and brass ornaments knocked off, standing in the clay on three feet, and a lump of peat supplying the place of the fourth.

The assault upon the hen having made a diversion in my favour, I turned to retreat, upon which this *comfortable* wife and mother hurried after me, still holding the petticoats, pursuing me as long as her sad treble wailings

could be heard, with most mournful and reiterated expressions of gratitude.

On once more gaining the open country, the regions of pure air and clean grass, I stopped to scrape from my shoes the unmentionable horrors of the floor I had crossed; and then made my way to Simon, who had, in the mean while, passed the house. I told him of the astonishing appearances it exhibited. "I know it," said he, "I know it, and I know that no tongue of man could describe it and be believed; — even when I saw it last, it was so, and I am aware it must grow worse. As I told you," he continued, "Sarah, though never a genius of the first class, was a respectable, cleanly, amiable young woman, and at the time of their marriage, they were both servants in the same family, and both were liked. He is an admirable ploughman, and has won many prizes at ploughing matches. He is equally expert at every species of farming, gardening, and what is called out-door work. This was the line of life to which he was bred, but, as you have seen, his usefulness does not stop there, for, besides being master of all sorts of smiths' and wrights' tools, and able to make wheel-barrows, ladders, rakes, harrows, and most things needed about a farm, he can also do masons' and slaters' work. The unhappy man can likewise make and mend keys and locks, can alter and fit locks to keys, and keys to locks. God help us, and lead us not into temptation. He is also the best shot in the country, and has more than once cobbled up an old gun or pistol, so that it would carry as far, and hit as true as the work of the best gun-smith. He makes and mends his own and his children's shoes — nay, I once before gave him cloth for a suit, when alarmed at every step he took, lest the fluttering rags, that were suspended round his thighs, might fly away; and he made the trowsers himself, as well as any tailor. And, by the way, these said trowsers had some queer fate, I cannot tell what. I happened to call at his door one morning, after having had the pleasure of knowing that he had been, for a day or two, drest in decency and comfort in his new suit, — and what did I behold but Jacob, with a great needle and thread, sewing at pieces of white flannel. The blood gushed into his face, as I said, laughing, 'What new work is this you have found out, now, Jacob?' and he confusedly replied, 'Oh, sir, ye see — sir — Sarah has gotten a bit wee lassie this morning, sir, and she was na'e just sae weel provided — puir thing!' So I'm just steekin' some bits o' flannins thegither for 't.' I stepped forward to wish him joy of his daughter, when, to my infinite amaze, I beheld the wretched infant lying in the cradle with an incongruous mass of materials under it and over it, and its poor wee, new-born head pillowed upon its father's new trowsers. How Sarah finally disposed of them, I cannot tell — but after this time, the neighbours remarked, Jacob was never seen with them again.

"He was then, and for many years before and after, farm servant to a gentleman who had a small farm and pleasure grounds, and so situated, for a time his usefulness had been very great. But his zeal gradually declined. His work fell in arrears, — the fences, gates, avenues, — every thing got into disorder; and in the garden and grounds weeds overtopped every plant and flower. He lounged about in a dreary drowsy state, quite indifferent as to the situation of things, — his dress was disgraceful, and it was often thought, that but for the food daily sent to him from his master's kitchen, he would have died of inanition. Yet his wages were high, and his master's family ever lavishing upon him; for his want of activity and care were charitably imputed to weakness, the result of his miserable fare, and the numberless discomforts of his nasty home.

"To the great amazement of his master and most others, one day while quietly at his work, two ominous-looking fellows inquired for him, and being sent to the field where he was, they served him with a summons at the in-

stance of a neighbouring nobleman, to answer for his deeds as a poacher. He laughed at the accusation, and in every respect behaved like an innocent man, and innocent he certainly was considered by those he served; but in spite of all that could be done, he was tried at the next quarter sessions, and on the most unjustifiable, inadmissible species of testimony, viz. that of the gamekeeper, his *accuser*, to whom, I suppose, you know, the fine imposed is always in such cases paid, and a sham letter which had no existence, quoted by the agent of the nobleman on whose grounds he was supposed to have trespassed, he was condemned either to pay a heavy fine or to take three months' confinement in Bridewell. The amount of the fine was greater than all his earthly possessions; and under the strongest conviction of his innocence of the alleged misdemeanor, and, *innocent or guilty*, of the indefensible means employed to convict him, the most prompt measures were instantly adopted in his behalf, and in a week or two he was released, very little improved, as it appeared, by his residence in a prison. Whether that proceeded from the company he met with there, or from the degradation which a man must feel, even in his own eyes, however guiltless, after having been dragged like a felon and lodged in jail, though for the shortest period, I cannot tell. But he sunk in estimation from that hour, and a few months brought to light, to the conviction of Jacob's best friends, that he was too truly guilty, and that night after night was spent in ranging not only the fields belonging to his master, but the whole surrounding hill and moor, and probably he killed more game than all the poachers in the country.

"This discovery excited extreme disgust in the minds of his master's family, and in union with the fact which as unexpectedly came to light, of his having long rented two fruit gardens secretly besides his potato-ground, which being all cultivated by his own hand, sufficiently accounted for the worn and sleepy state in which he came to work, or rather to *repose* in his master's barn. It also solved a problem which had often puzzled them, and that was the dying away and disappearance of many valuable plants and shrubs and trees from the garden and grounds; fruit of every kind becoming invisible almost as soon as it was ripe, as did all sorts of vegetables. Hay, straw, corn, potatoes, and coals, which for years had consumed without a fire! yet no locks were broken and no dog barked. He had two milk cows and a sow, and sold milk, sold fruit, vegetables, young plants of all descriptions; but with all these sources of wealth he daily grew poorer and poorer, and his wife, his children, his house, grew daily more abject and beggarly. A year after, he lost his excellent master and his place. But he never was out of work, for he was known to be ingenious and capable of turning his hand to anything, and his wages often amounted to a guinea a week, and sometimes to more, and this without taking into account his nameless profits and acquisitions, if ever there was any *profit* in that which is obtained by a breach of honesty or of the laws. It was also strongly alleged that Jacob was only more cautious, not cured of his thirst for the blood of hares and moor-game, for which he always found a ready sale in the hotels and inns of the neighbouring towns.

"No one thinks more hardly of many parts of the absurd and tyrannical game-laws than I do. But whether it may be from the skulking knavish habits, the deceit, falsehood, and meanness consequent upon smuggling of any description, either as a poacher, illicit distiller, or a vender of contraband goods, I cannot pretend to tell, — but I have invariably observed, that entering on any of those practices, even sporting without a license, certainly one of the least blameworthy of them all, destroys a man's integrity, and leads to the ruin of soul, body, and estate. People go on toiling and struggling to procure money, the means of wealth, as if the *means*, no matter how obtained, were all that is necessary! — Poor short-sighted creatures! With-

out the blessing of the Almighty, which certainly never was or will be given along with the profits of knavery, what could all the riches on earth avail us?"

"I hope I am not indulging either superstitious notions or slanderous feelings and opinions respecting the conduct or fate of others, when I assure you, my dear boy, that I have for many years looked upon Jacob Gray's fate and state in this world, in spite of all his uncommon talents, vigorously and industriously exerted, as a very striking instance of the retributive justice of God. He labours *literally* night and day, has always high wages, enjoys good health, is perfectly sober. But the blessing of the Most High is not in his gains, — he scarcely has clothes to cover him, — his wife is like a beggar, his children starved, squalid, unwashed, melancholy-looking objects, hanging over with dirty rags; and when or how his money goes, is a mystery I can no how unravel. In short, Jacob Gray's abilities, life, character, and situation, and the situation of his family — like many other realities in this world — are so inconsistent with each other, and seem to hang so ill together, that were we to meet in a work of fiction with the truest and simplest statement of the mere facts that could be written — we would fling it away in disgust, from their apparent absurdity and the absence of truth and nature." "Does his wife not drink?" said L. "So has been asked by many a one, his situation is so unaccountable," replied Simon. "And there are people who have said she did. But never did I see or find any one who could say they had seen her in such a state. She does indeed tiddle at tea, which by our good and wise friend, John Turner's wife, was considered only second to whiskey in its baneful influences on a poor man's comfort. Still many a thriving workman's wife indulges occasionally in tea — and nothing that I know respecting them in any way explains their abject state, except what I have said — that in vain we rise up early, and late take rest, and eat from day to day the bread of carefulness, unless we obtain the blessing of God upon our means, whether these means be small or great. Without *that* blessing, the man who is the possessor of millions may not only be wretched, but actually *poor*. That Jacob has long ceased to implore that blessing — at least in church — where God has more especially promised to bestow it — I am certain. For so surely do sins and crimes and vices herd together, that the commission of one, by a sort of necessity, involves the commission of another, probably two, which include other four, and so on until the whole conduct and character are depraved and lost. Thus Jacob deceived and misled an innocent girl by false promises and pretences. Possibly he did not *purpose* to *perjure* himself at the time he swore how entirely he loved her and would make her his wife: but, when he had led her into guilt, and was become guilty himself, both himself and his victim were degraded in his eyes, and he hated her as the cause of the wretched feelings in his own heart. Instead of turning to God by repentance, and healing the deadly wound he had inflicted, by fulfilling his vows to the unfortunate young creature who believed them; misled by the devil, the cruel wretch forsook her, and forsook the district where she lived; thinking, by changing his place, to escape from the serpent in his own breast. From that time all went wrong. In his new place, his chest was robbed of all its contents, including a quantity of excellent clothes and a large sum in gold, the savings of wages. He cursed and swore, but that did not bring back his treasure, neither did it make him think how small the loss which made him outrageous was in comparison of *hers* whom his ruthless robbery had bereaved of virtue and peace and good name, and left in penury and despair, to brook the scorn of the world, and to bring up her offspring of sin and shame as she best might. To me it has always seemed that her *bar* was upon him. He became reckless and riotous a time, and, by way of settling, married Sarah. She was in those days a

decent respectable young woman — as a wife, you have just seen what she is! Poverty soon ensued on his marriage. He got into debt, and took to poaching to eke out his means. That led to falsehood, cunning, and knavery, under many aspects. Up at nights in his nefarious quest for game, and wandering among his master's property, the temptations to pilfer were too numerous and too powerful for his weak and depraved principles to withstand. The more and the more he robbed his excellent, kind, and trusting old master — who by many useful gifts tried to keep him somewhat decent in his dress — still the poorer and poorer he grew. His Sunday suit, bit by bit became a working dress; he had not the means to replace it. He bought old clothes to cover his bare skin, but had scarcely ever the blessing of a whole shirt to his back; so the power of going to church, from which he had profited so little, was lost. And he has long been what you saw him just now, more like a poor Irish beggar than a highly gifted Scotch ploughman! What is to be the end of all this, I pretend not to guess. He may yet have a long tack of this world; though his constitution has been sorely shattered by the life of penury and labour he has passed, and especially by a grievous injury from the bursting of a gun at midnight, which had nearly blown his head to pieces. But he is not yet forty years of age, whatever his broken-down look and care-worn countenance may lead you to suppose."

THE DIVINITY STUDENT.

"Come, my lad," said Simon one day, "we must go a little out of our way to look in upon the good bodies in yon bit cottage below the trees; they're worthy people, laborious and contented. If all in the same rank were as sober and well-disposed, we would hear less growling and less rout about bad times and low wages."

The family received us most joyously, and after all the usual mutual inquiries as to the health and number of their respective households, Simon put his wonted question, "Have you sent your children to school?" Both father and mother answered promptly, that they had, and, in spite of the number of their little ones, and their very slender means, they had, by the united influence of industry and frugality, not only sent all their older ones to school, but the eldest boy had shown such a talent for learning, that he was always dux of his class. And with glowing looks they added that, whatever struggles it might cost them, as soon as he had acquired English reading, writing, and arithmetic, they would set him to the Latin and Greek, that he might in time become student of divinity. "Oh," cried the mother, scarcely able to articulate from the fullness of her heart, "oh, but it wad be a proud day for me were the Lord to spare me to see our wee Georgie wag his bit curly head in a pulpit — and teach His word amang us."

Simon's sunny face, which had been bright with benevolent joy at the first part of this intelligence, was crossed by a cloud, and there was a painful contraction at the top of his nose, before the good woman ceased to speak. He was silent for a moment or two, and then said, "May heaven bless your worthy intentions towards your children, my good friends; and I hope you may be guided to choose the fittest way to ensure your own and their well-being. But you must think well, and consult some experienced friend, before you involve yourselves and your son, and all the rest of your family in such a course of cares and troubles as this plan would bring you into." "O Simon," said the wife, "we will think naething a trouble that we can do for Georgie, and as for care, we've been used to care a' "

days! that will be naething new to us." "Indeed," said Simon, "that is a mistake. The care you have hitherto had, is only what belongs to your own station in life. And every station, from the king upon the throne to the meanest of his subjects, has its own peculiar care — and, my word for it, the smallest share right seldom falls to the highest station. But, let us think a little what will be your situation should you follow up this scheme. What do you pay for the schobling of the children?" "The wee things," replied the mother, "that only learn to read and shoo, they cost three bawbees in the week. Johnie learns readin' and writin', and we pay as muckle for him. But Geordie costs us tippence, for he learns counting, and a grand scholar he is — at least the maister's aye sayin' sae." "So then," said Simon, "you get four of your children taught those useful branches for five shillings a-quarter. And what will it cost to teach the boy Latin and Greek?" "No muckle," replied the father, "I canna just say preceesely — about eighteen pence i' the quarter for each, I reckon." "I dare say you are right," said Simon, "and to teach him Latin and Greek, which will take him four or five long years to learn, will cost as much, and far more, than to teach four or five of your boys and girls to read and write, and count, and sew, which can all be acquired in a third of the time. But that is not all, a Latin and Greek scholar must have Latin and Greek books, grammars, dictionaries, with fifty other clags and claims you know nothing about. A Greek and Latin scholar must be clad like a scholar. He will then be a big lad, and, though he should not be gaining a penny in the week, you can't send him skelping bare-leggit and bare-footed to school. After he has been all that dreary time at school, then he must go to the college, far from home, far from your porridge and milk, goddwise; far from your cozie peat fire, from your great pot of wholesome potatoes, from his share of your great oat cakes and pease bannocks, — your kind care cannot reach him there. After you have toiled and spun, and exerted soul and strength to furnish him with shoes and stockings, you must still go to the market, the tailor, the shoemaker, the hatter, for the rest of his cleeeding, and think — count, if you can, what money it will cost to fit him out in one of the plainest suits; and how long, think you, will one of these suits last him, since it must be in every-day use? Your husband's Sunday hat and clothes are kept for Sundays, and may serve him for five or six years, with your good care. But, at college, your son's must be worn from early in the morning till night, and who, there, will mend a broken stitch, or darn a hole? Who will carefully wash or mend his little store of shirts? He will be obliged to pay a washerwoman twopence a piece every time they are out, and she, instead of washing them like you, will beetle and daud them to rags upon a stone at some burn-side. He must go to college in the winter, and, besides paying four guineas for admission into each of the classes, which he must pass through before he can get a license to preach, — there are the endless claims of servants and porters, and all the other hangers-on about a college; and he must pay double the rent of your cottage, barn, byre, and kail-yard, for getting leave to sleep and starve in some dark and dirty garret in a foul and smoky lane. He can do nothing without constant endless study; and he can't study without food and light and fire — all which must be bought at a dear rate — so that, depend upon it, the bringing up of one son for the church, will not only swallow up the means of educating your other children, but will involve you all in labyrinths of want and wo. For, rely upon it, your utmost efforts will scarce be able to do more than plunge the unfortunate lad into circumstances, where, to get himself even *half-taught*, he will soon be but '*half-fed, half-clad, half-mad, half-sarkit*.'

"Should his health and his reason outlive all the distracting cares and

mortifications he must expect to encounter in a university, where he is doomed to come into comparison and competition with giddy, or, it may be, insolent and cruel lads of rank and fortune, and to bide their jeers and their scorn, besides the grief a good son must feel at all the hardships his kind parents are enduring on his account, what will he have when all's done? Supposing him taught by your good schoolmaster here, and then, he has passed through his three or four winters of study and starvation at college, and come back to you with his license in his pocket, what then, what richer is he? or what is he to do to make himself richer or to procure the means of existence? There are a thousand parish churches in Scotland, and there are more than fifteen hundred licensed, unprovided preachers. So that, supposing the destroying angel should pass over our poor land this night, and leave a dead minister in every manse, there would still remain five hundred young men to provide for! But as, thank God, there is no probability of such a miserable miracle being wrought for feeding young preachers, we must conclude that your son would be placed in competition with fifteen hundred others. Now, what interest have you? To whom could you or your son apply for a church?" "Och hon, oh Gude kens!" said the father with a groan. "But surely, Maister Simon, my puir bit callan's merit would win him some frien'." "I hope it would," said Simon; "but whatever his merits might be, to be useful to himself in a worldly way, they must be known, not only to you or me, but to those who can reward them; and, to get into situations where his merit can be discovered, though he were as good as an angel, here he is in this evil world, and to the customs and prejudices of this evil world he must submit; for the world will not submit to him!"

"If you choose a gentleman's profession for your son, he must wear the dress of a gentleman, and be fit, in his outward appearance, for a gentleman's companion. And what, think you, will one dress for a gentleman cost? nine or ten guineas, my friend; and your son could make small use of either his learning or his license without it: yet, to procure it, he must either run into debt or you must pay it. For, never forget that, by making your son a preacher of the gospel, you have rendered it unfit, and you have rendered it impossible for him to delve and plough. His labours, thenceforward, are in the vineyard of the Lord; earthly tools and weapons wielded by the arm of flesh he must relinquish."

"Och hon, wae's me!" cried the mother; "this has grown an unfco warl' since the days when Peter and John were called frae their boats and their nets, and Matthew from the receipt o' custom, to preach the holy gospel! What Latin and Greek did they learn, or what college had they to gang and starve at?" "O gudewife," cried the husband, "what's that ye're sayin'? Ha'e ye forgotten your Bible, and forgotten yoursel' at the same minute?" The poor woman started — recollected herself a moment — and then with a solemn "Lord forgie me!" added, "Forgot mysel' indeed! They wha had Him that's the way, and the truth, and the life, to teach them, needed nae college! and they that had the gift o' tongues needed nae master! Gude, wise Maister Simon, ye've saved my son, ye've cured me o' my silly, pridefu' wish. My noble bairn shall ne'er be sent by his mother to stint and starve, a half-learned mongrel object, neither a decent warkman nor gentleman! Ye needna blame the bits o' thoughtless young lords and rich folk's sons for jibing at sic ill-red-up countryfied stirks for coming amang them. I reckon they wad jibe nane at them in their ain places, either in a workshop or ahint a pleugh; and, my word, wha wad be mair likely to gie them a snap or a jeer than just the town-ward lads o' their ain rank? Och, och, I needna forget mysel', when I was a bit young lass, what I thought o' a puir pykit-like lad, wi' a threadbare, roosty black coat, the sleeves o' t the breadth o' my hand, owre short for his lang lea

arms; and his puir sma' neck but scrimply covered wi' a sair-worn black silk napkin! Mony a time I compared him in my mind wi' my ain John there, strong, and hale, and happy, wi' his coarse jacket and trousers as stout as himsel', and his spade out owre his shouther, gawn singin' to his wark, and gairing the very grun' shake wi' the weight o' his tramp. I think shame o' mysel' now, but I canna deny that there was as muckle scorn as pity in what I felt for the puir stranger; and gin't had na been for the sight o' his lean, yellow, mournfu' face, and hollow een, I mony a time, like a cruel young wretch as I was, wad ha'e laught at seeing him wandering on hid sma' shanks awa among the braes, just to sit there frae morning till night, as the herd-callans tell us, readin' some sma' bit book, and whiles writing, but maistly just glowrin' at the grun' as silent and motionless as if he had been dead. Gude help us, puir young man! maybe he was the son o' some puir, vain, silly mother like me, that wudna be content wi' seein' her precious bairn well and happy, but, whether she could or no, behooved to ha'e him a minister." "I do n't doubt it—I do n't doubt it," said Simon, "there are too, too many such!

"I dare say you have all seen the poor forlorn daft man, John Philips, who used to go about the country dressed sometimes in petticoats, sometimes in breeches, but always with such a strange motley mass o' duds clanging about him, that it was difficult to guess whether he was man or woman till the evidence of his long matted beard settled the doubt." "I mind him weel," cried both man and wife, "puir, harmless object. He was aye asserting that he was like St. Paul, for too much learning had made him mad." "Too true, too true indeed," said Simon, with a tear glittering in his eyes. "Too much learning did make admirable John Philips mad! There was not a cleverer nor a better lad in Scotland than he, and he might have raised himself to any office in the kingdom by taking the right course, so splendid were his talents, so delightful his disposition,—but nothing would satisfy his mother unless John would be a minister. He obeyed her,—and so came of it. After having learned reading, and writing, and arithmetic, and read more books than half the boys of his rank read in a life-time,—his character for ability, integrity, and sound sense, was such, that when only thirteen years old, he might have been taken by a respectable and thriving merchant as under-clerk. With this gentleman he was sure to rise, and he would, in all human probability, have raised every member of his family along with him, so kind, so dutiful, so good was he; but all that would not do for his mother, so for Latin he went. For a while the increased industry of father and mother sufficed to meet the ever increasing expense: but, by the time he got to college, the younger children began to be abridged of their teaching. First the girls got no arithmetic,—then the boys,—next the youngest girl was not taught to write, and the youngest boy could hardly read, and could neither write nor spell when he was taken from school. 'John would mak' up a' that to them, and mair, when he cam' hame,' was their mother's consolation for their and her privations. The children's and the father's Sunday clothes became their every-day wear, and no new, hardy, home-made jackets and trousers supplied their place. Mirth and glee no longer resounded in the cottage, but long toil, long fasts, and scrimpit fare came in their stead.

"Meanwhile John at college laboured day and night, pinched himself of food and fire, and saved his poor mother's hard-earned pittance to the very uttermost. During the vacations he saw the ruin at home, and a voice seemed constantly sounding in his heart, 'This is all for me!' Instead of spending his time in his studies, he laboured with his hands, and did his uttermost at every vacant hour to bring on the education of the brothers and sisters who had been sacrificed for him. His eldest sister went out to service, and also to harvest work, and when he was ready to depart for col-

lege in November, she gave him a little packet which he was not to open till he got to his lodgings, and, when he got there, he found with a bursting heart that it contained all her wages!

"His sad, pale countenance, perpetual diligence, and great talents and merits as a scholar, had not passed unnoticed by the professors; and when he went for his Greek ticket, the worthy man, with many complimentary and kind expressions, presented it to him gratis. Another — the professor of Logic, did the same. Still this generosity, and his utmost efforts and most rigid economy, could not save him from wants; the second winter was worse and severer than either; each preceding season becoming more and more grievous as his means and his strength and his spirit faded away.

"So passed some dismal years of his novitiate, ere the time came when he could obtain a license to preach. And during that sad and dreary period, whether at home or at college, his labours and his anxieties increased. In his lodgings, by the light of a wretched lamp, he sat, hour after hour, toiling his over-wrought brains, grudging himself sleep and food, and even the foul and putrid oil by the smoky flame of which he was striving to write; for his thoughts constantly flew home, where, in imagination he saw the ceaseless labours of his dear and indulgent parents, and the wan faces and scanty meals and extinguished light of their once joyful fire-side. When at home, he wrote sermons, he wrote for magazines — for reviews — he attempted to teach here and there. His sermons were dead stock, his papers were ill received and worse paid, at the best, — and were oftener rejected than admitted. As for his plans of teaching, to whatever hand he turned, he still found his poverty the cause of his continuing poor; for in spite of all he could do, his small winnings never sufficed to furnish his wardrobe so as to enable him to dress permanently in a manner becoming his situation and views, because it always appeared to him that nothing he could win was his own, until he had replaced his parents and sisters and brothers in that state of comfort from which their liberality to him had thrust them. His teaching, therefore, was confined to those of the humblest rank, and even in this lowly task, his best feelings interposed to obstruct him. In his own parish, every scholar he could obtain must have been taken from the worthy, generous teacher, who had been his own early and liberal patron; and, by going to any neighbouring parish with the least prospect of success, he must have encountered a walk of six or seven miles, morning and evening, or else go into lodgings, the expense of which all his emoluments would not defray. Meek and retiring, he was easily rebuffed; and what in happier circumstances he would have received as a jest, he now shrunk from as a rebuke or repulse, on which he would ruminate until his mind was filled with images of despair.

"At length, the eighth important session came, and as the period of his examination approached, these paroxysms of anxiety and desperation became more frequent and intense; and during his strenuous and almost incessant labours in preparation, which all but himself deemed nearly superfluous, his sleep forsook him, and he lost all inclination for food. He sat continually poring over his books and papers, and began to feel, with considerable alarm, that his mind wandered from the subjects of his study, and that he made no advance in his preparations. He doubled his efforts and increased the evil! He started to find he was often speaking to himself of he knew not what; and vainly tried to retrace his thoughts. Even while making the effort, his mind wandered again, and he was haunted by an undefinable dread, a horrible suspicion that he was becoming insane.

"The period for his examination came — and though his mind was in the most deplorable uproar, such was the high place he held in the good opinion and good will of every member of presbytery to whom his life and ab-

acter were known, that he was passed without the slightest difficulty ; his confused answers and bewildered air being imputed to the overwhelming diffidence so often the attendant on real merit and genius.

"He was in arrears to his landlady, but she trusted one who was so sober and who had paid her hitherto ; and in a somewhat more comfortable state of feeling he returned home.

"He had now obtained the object of his own and his parents' ardent wishes. He quitted the university with the esteem and admiration of his teachers — his license in his pocket, and complimented by the presbytery on his worth and talents. What did it all avail ? Who would, who could employ a starving half-clothed lad, more like a mendicant than a minister of the gospel ? His coat was threadbare, his linen in rags, every thing worn out. On his way home, as soon as he was clear of the city, he turned off the high road, and to save his shoes and stockings, took them off, and pursued his way over the trackless hills upon his naked feet !

"But in spite of all his care, at last his wardrobe was worn out, and he blushed to ask any one to recommend him even as a tutor. Even if he did presume to do so, what family would receive him in that or any other capacity ? Here then he must stay, an unceasing burden on his beloved parents, or his dear and generous sister ; instead of being, as they had all so fondly anticipated, the comfort and support of those who had suffered and sacrificed so much for his sake ! sufferings and sacrifices the thought of which continually lay like an icy hand upon his heart !

"Such were the gloomy reveries to which he was a prey, when the widowed mother of an amiable young man of fortune, who had countenanced him at college, but who had lately died, sent him her departed son's complete wardrobe, accompanied by a letter so delicate and so gratifying to all his feelings, that the gift, so unexpected and so ample, melted, soothed, and refreshed his poor young withering heart like balm. Soon after this, a member of presbytery asked him to preach in his church on an approaching week-day, — a request received with a mixture of pleasure and dread, which agitated his enfeebled frame to the most violent degree. The day came, still this diseased agitation continued. His whole family accompanied him to church. He expected, he wished this ; yet it gave him pain, and added to his terror, he could not, even to himself, tell why. In a turmoil of emotion, he ascended the pulpit, and his reading of the first psalm was nearly inaudible. He inwardly lifted his heart to God, imploring, struggling, and hoping to obtain composure whilst it was sung ; and when it ended, he rose to pray with somewhat less agitation. Still his ears rang, and green and blue clouds swam before his eyes — his luminous, dark eyes — which, with intensity of feeling he turned upwards, and clasped his hands in the attitude of adoration. During that moment of silent prayer, many present thought they had never seen a more beautiful or interesting youth. At that instant the congregation was startled by the loud crash of a broken window ; and exactly as poor John Philips had opened his lips in a first effort to speak, a ball, flung by some unlucky boy, struck him on the face. It was all over. He fell back in the pulpit ; and his miserable mother shrieked and fainted at the sight. The worthiest and most influential of those present crowded round him with tenderness and sympathy, but their kindest encouragements were all unavailing. They vainly urged him to proceed with the service ; it was even doubtful if he heard them. The silver cord was broken — the splendid intellect shattered — and he fled homewards, followed by his enthusiastic mother and almost delirious sister — both under the influence of feelings which those, who have never been so circumstanced, are unfit to imagine. Oh, how unfit, then, are they to judge !

"His poor parents saw with dismay the wanderings of his noble mind, and did their best to sooth and reconcile him to his situation, and to make

him think lightly of the accident which had occurred. Whether they followed the best method can't be known. Sometimes the most wholesome management only feeds the disease; and, in his case, every accident, every chance occurrence increased the evil; and, in a few months, he was a hopeless, wandering madman!

"Such, my good friends," said Simon, after a little pause, and with a tremor in his voice, — "such was John Philips, the most dear, and valued, and admired friend that ever Simon Frazer possessed." Long before he had come to the end of his story, both husband and wife were fixed in breathless attention. When he stopped, the good woman covered her face with her apron and sobbed aloud. The man turned away and stood long mute at the door of his cottage. After a time, Simon hemmed away a choking in his breast, and then in a more cheerful voice, said, "Take my advice, my good friends, give each of your children the best education you can afford. Remember I say, *each*. Let your honest pride for ever keep this word in your memories. Oh, never, by pernicious efforts to raise one of them out of your own sphere, be tempted to stint the others, so as, in any way, to make them unfit companions for their brother. Do nothing to cause envy on the one part or superciliousness on the other, and so loosen the dear and holy family ties in a cold world like this, where we need never again expect to form any so tender and so true. Do n't lay the foundation of lasting poverty and a hopeless struggle for the rest of your days, at the same time that you do injustice to children equally dear with him whom you would thus prefer. Think for a little; — *even should you succeed* in educating one of your sons, and suppose him set out in the best circumstances: say, that he is genteel, accomplished, and learned, — that he is chosen as a tutor in some great man's family, — that they love and respect him, — that they promise him a church, and all things promise fair: How would you feel under the consciousness that you had placed this precious son in a sphere where you, — aye, you, or his mother, a dearer name still, dare not even approach him, however much he may love and revere you both, without making his ears tingle, and his heart quail with dread that your relation to him should be discovered? Do n't stare at this as a wonder, or think it would imply any disparagement either on you or on the heart or understanding of your son. It is this world where we live, — nay, my friends, it is human nature; and he must either be more or less than human creature in this nineteenth century, in this Great Britain, as it is in real life, who could without agony, bear that the parents whom, judging from himself, his patron's family may have very naturally concluded to be of the same rank as their son, should be produced before thoughtless children, scornful visitors, or insolent servants, as mere worthy hardworking cottagers. You have but to reflect upon this to feel all its painful truth. Nay, I well remember a most amiable youth, in such circumstances as I have supposed your son, who, on coming into the breakfast-room where the family were already assembled, and the letters and papers for the day on the table, found the whole party convulsed with laughter over a letter, a little, dirty, ill-folded letter, addressed in such a scrawl, and such spelling, as defied them to decipher. His entrance was hailed as the only one likely to translate the unknown characters with which it was covered, and his first glance at the post-mark showed it was from his excellent father. He nearly fainted, and his obstinate silence and mystery regarding this occurrence leading the family to suspect him of some low and improper connexion, he lost his place, and was well-nigh ruined for life. Therefore, my worthy friends, I again entreat you, give all your children the best education you can afford. Teach them, as the ground-work of all other teaching, the high and lofty principle of Christian faith and the love of God. Teach them industry from their earliest years, and impress upon their minds, that any

kind of honest labour is better than idleness or dependence of any description. Encourage them to lay by a portion of all their little earnings to buy books, and always take the advice of your clergyman, or some other judicious friend, as to what books they should buy. When they are of a proper age to choose a trade, assist them to the utmost of your power in deciding upon their line of life, and do not be anxious to place them in situations above their own rank. But always endeavour to instil into their young minds, to root and establish in their hearts the animating truth, that there is *no* trade, *no* profession, from which, in this blessed country, those who are diligent, upright, and aspiring, may not raise themselves to situations of the first respectability and importance."

The father gave his hard hand to Simon with a most eloquent grasp, and his wife stammered through her tears, "Oh, Gude bless you! Gude be wi' you, worthy Simon. Ye've saved my son!"

THE THREE COUSINS.

ONE sultry, gloomy night, we arrived late at a little inn, after a dark and most fatiguing journey; just in time to escape the fury of a thunder-plump, and thankful to lay ourselves to rest with all convenient speed. After a night of profound repose, Simon awoke me with "Up, my boy! up, and open your eyes on this beautiful corner of this beautiful and glorious world." I started up at the moment, and did indeed open my eyes on such a scene of loveliness as my fancy had never pictured, — Loch Lomond, with its many-coloured islands, glowing with the slanting rays of a bright autumnal morning sun. The heavy rain had cleared the atmosphere of all the smothering vapours of the preceding evening; and the new-washed sky and world looked so fresh and brilliant, that the heart must have been cold, cold and dead, which could look on it unmoved with feelings of adoration and love towards its divine Creator.

The mixture of sublimity and of the softest loveliness is what, I think, particularly characterizes this enchanted Eden of land and water; and it seemed that the longer we remained, and the more we saw, the more our admiration increased. Simon indulged my love of such scenery by staying in the neighbourhood for a day or two, and by wandering with me to the many points of view, and the many nooks of fairy beauty with which his frequent visits to that part of the country had made him acquainted.

"Of old, I had many friends hereabouts," said he, with a sigh and a mournful voice, while he gazed sadly on a cottage perched on a steep green bank which descends with its rich grassy sward into the lake; "many friends; but they are gone! This is the country of the Macfarlans — yonder is their island. There lies many a gallant chief and faithful clansman of the days of other years; but the Macfarlans I knew were not chiefs; and chieftainry had got a deadly blow, in these lowland borders of the Highlands, before my day. But yon cottage, stuck as it were on a shelf in the steep side of Blerhaneck, and other cottages now mingled with the dust, were the dwellings of two brothers and a sister, with their families — all Macfarlans — some of whose children were very dear to me; and, in good hands, their humble history might be wrought into a tragic tale.

"In that wild, lovely spot, three amiable cousins-german, Donald, John, and Jeanie, grew up from infancy together; the two boys somewhat older than their sweet little cousin, who was, therefore, the object of their united care and love. They were all the world to each other, having no companions. Advancing years made no change; except that childish play was changed for useful labour, in which the attention and the assistance of

both cousins were still devotedly paid to Jeanie, whom they equally loved, and who seemed to have equal love for them. But Jeanie's lovely face and lovely character were known to more young men than Donald and John; and all three were startled, as if one of the mountains had tumbled into the loch, when a rich Grahame of the neighbourhood asked Jeanie to be his wife. Probably this incident awoke all of them to a consciousness of the real state of their individual and relative feelings and situations. The bold, abrupt intruder was looked upon with amazement and terror, and by the two young men Jeanie's decision was waited for in agony of which you, my good fellow, have little conception, since *you* had cause to fear no rival. The bare idea of her accepting Grahame, seemed to wring the very life out of their hearts, and perhaps it was only then that each became aware of the excess of his own attachment. But Donald was the first to speak. He poured out his feelings to his faithful John, and John's lips quivered and grew white, and were from that moment closed. His face and neck became as red as blood; a deadly paleness followed, and then he grew very sick. Donald paused and exclaimed, 'John, you are ill.' But amiable John calmly and softly replied, 'It was but a sudden pain that struck me through, — maybe I staid owre lang in the loch to-day.' And recovering his composure, he continued to listen to his cousin.

"Jeanie did not keep them long in this state. She quietly and decisively dismissed her rich admirer, — and when Donald's rapture at the intelligence burst all former bounds, John discovered, that though this beautiful creature had the truest affection for both of her cousins, it was only Donald's love that she returned. Pious and meek, with a noble sense of honour and true love, from that moment he determined never to breathe one word respecting his own feelings to any mortal ear; or mar, by the knowledge of his affliction, the pure happiness of the two beings dearest to him on earth, and whose fates, in a few weeks from that time, were indissolubly united.

"Three years of blissful peace had glided over their home, and Jeanie had brightened and deepened all their hopes and interests by making Donald the proud and grateful father of a wee sweet Jeanie, the miniature image of herself, forming a new epoch, a new existence, a new and tender link to knit them with intensity of love to each other.

"But war was abroad. Britain was fighting with America. And far and wide the misery spread into many a Highland glen, and many a lonely hut, — and along the beautiful shores of Loch Lomond, where widows, and orphans, and childless mothers mourned in vain. In that miserable, ill-fated contest, hundreds upon hundreds of the brave Highlanders perished; their regiments were reduced almost to skeletons, and demands for more men were made by the generals, on which occasion the young chief of Macfarlan offered to raise a company for the 71st regiment. Donald was young Macfarlan's foster-brother, and an idea that it was possible to remain behind when his chief went to war never crossed his imagination. To be with him, to be at his side in every situation of danger and difficulty, was not merely his *duty*, it was his right, his prized and envied privilege, which he would never relinquish, far less *forfeit*, but with his life. So that, in the minds of Donald and John, their following their chief to battle seemed as perfectly inevitable, as that where their own bodies went their heads would be also. To part with Jeanie was the agony, — the rack that wrung from them the cold and clammy dew till it stood trembling on their brows. And Jeanie was no Spartan wife: gentle and mild, — she shuddered at broils and bloodshed, and peace was the desire of her heart. But her heart beat with the blood of Macfarlan, and she would never wreck a brave man's honour, or interpose a wish to detain him from his post. 'I go with you, Donald,' she said in a firm voice, though her lips and cheeks were cold and pale. What would Jean Macfarlan do at home, and her husband in war

and peril in a foreign land? You, and John, and I, shall never part.' A smothered groan escaped her; she turned her eyes to heaven with such a look, as if struck with the presumption of the expression that had escaped her, and the thought how soon, soon they might all be parted for ever, made her sick and faint.

"I was here about that time, and heard these particulars. I was also sitting on Kempuck-point, when the transports conveying reinforcements for the 42d and 71st regiments, besides other troops for America, sailed down the Clyde. The rocks were crowded with the relations and friends of those on board, under the strong impression, which the disastrous nature of the warfare but too much countenanced, that they were looking on them for the last time. The vessels passed so near to the rocks, that, with my little pocket-glass, I felt myself face to face with my two dear friends who were standing with Jeanie, set like a gem between them, with her little child, unconscious of it, bounding and dancing at her knee. I also saw, what indeed the attitudes of many on board betokened, that an infectious sorrow had spread among the people on deck, in powerful sympathy with their numerous friends clustering on the rocks,—each party feeling that, in all probability, they should never meet again on earth. This strong and painful impression was suddenly excited to a degree almost unbecomingly hardy soldiers, by a piper in one of the vessels lowly and slowly wailing out the dirge-like tones of 'Atiel ma tuilli.' I saw an electric start at the first note. I felt it myself; and many a highland tongue around me echoed back in sobs and groans to the mournful sounds, 'Ochon, ochon—och ay! they're going away, but they'll never return!' But the ships floated past with the ebb-tide, and the sharp turn which the river makes at the next point shut them from our view.

"After an ordinary voyage, the vessels with our brave countrymen, including John and Donald with their two precious charges, at once the delight of their hearts and the causes of ceaseless anxiety and fear, were all safely landed: and too soon, as poor Jeanie thought, they were marched to the field of battle. Marching, counter-marching, flitting their camps, and changing their stations, as if no concerted plan or purpose actuated their councils,—who can tell, who can conceive the fatigue, the privations, or the harassments of the troops! and what was the situation of the miserable followers of this army,—of Jeanie and her child! When the moment to part from her came, Donald dared only trust himself with a hurried farewell,—he gasped and started away. She fixed her large bright eyes full of supplication in John's face. No tear fell. She uttered no sound, but lifted her clasped imploring hands. He came close to her and said, 'Jeanie! if I do not guard Donald with my own life, be sure I was the first to fall,'—and he fled from her, not even trusting himself to touch her offered hand. How little does the inexperienced soldier know how impossible it may be to fulfil such a promise.

"It would, I believe, be difficult even for a military man to convey to you an idea of the miseries and mortifications of our brave countrymen in this wretchedly mismanaged warfare! Their strength, their blood, their lives, were poured out in obtaining victories that were never made use of, and, through the madness or imbecility of their commanders, sustaining defeats and disgraces that can never be forgot. There, over thousands of miles, they were led in toilsome and forced marches, under the burning sun of midsummer, to positions from which they were marched back again! Sometimes their route lay through salt marshes, from three inches to three feet deep, without a drop of fresh water to cool their tongues; through tangled, trackless and smothering woods; and their comforts so badly provided for, that they were compelled to pass long intervals of fatigue and danger without food. They have even been led *instantly into action with*

the enemy, on emerging from a swamp, where the water sometimes reached to their shoulders, and through which they had struggled in the dead of night. We had no Wellington in those days!"

"And Jeanie — what was her situation?" said I. "That," replied Simon, "is left to our own minds to conjecture — I cannot tell. Huddled out of sight, with other followers of the camp, I suppose, to dree out days and weeks of agonized suspense, and bear, as she might, the rumours of disasters and battles, to hear of the dead and to see the dying brought in! In one of these profitless, unhonoured battles, at a place called Guildford, Donald, as covering sergeant to his chief, fell in the heat of the engagement, while John, with the rest of the party, pushed forward in the murderous duties of war. He missed Donald from young Macfarlan's side — his heart grew cold and his head reeled — but he could not desert his post to fly, like a deserter, at the call of private feeling. The party were victorious; and when the engagement was over, with a bleeding heart and covered with wounds, he returned to the spot where he first missed his dear friend. Till darkness overwhelmed every object, he remitted not for a moment the search for his body: Except a bonnet with the feathers dagged in blood, which he thought was Donald's, the least trace of him could not be found. This bonnet he took with him, and under such feelings as I leave you to conceive, if you are able, he returned to Jeanie! For my own part, I think it impossible to form an idea of what John felt. Jeanie at once recognised Donald's bloody bonnet, and read his fate in John's bloody, haggard face.

"From John, after his return home, I learned the *general* facts of that period; but so convulsively did the attempt to speak of the particulars affect him, that, even after the lapse of years, he was unable to detail them. Too just, and too well aware of the faithful affection of John for his cousin, and too rational not to understand, even unfold, the impossibility of a soldier leaving his duty to attend a fallen friend in the heat of battle, and, moreover, fully appreciating the anguish which wrung his amiable nature, she received him, even during the wild agony of her first tearless grief, with all her wonted kindness. But, poor woman! this was only the beginning of her trials. Her child, her little sweet companion, that occupied and blessed her in many a dark and dismal hour; and even after Donald's death, like a bright gleam from heaven, its sunny smiles and innocent prattle were light and life and warmth to her blighted heart. But oh, this sweet gleam was quenched; her precious Jeanie drooped, languished, and without any complaint that could be named, died. It was then she felt her widowhood! While the blessed little voice spoke of its father — and while she could clasp his child to her heart, Donald seemed not utterly lost; but when she had closed its meek, lovely eyes, and laid its little beloved body in a far, foreign, unconsecrated grave, Jeanie's light was extinguished, hope forsook her, and for a time her anguish amounted to the darkness of utter despair.

"At every interval, when by any possibility John could make his way to his wretched cousin's desolate, temporary house, whatever the purest and noblest devotion of heart could do or utter for her consolation, he lavished upon her. He prayed by her and for her, when her own heart, withered and blighted by excess of misery, could hardly send up a prayer for herself. In time, her meek spirit rose above the pressure of these mortal blows; and, in the effort to show John her grateful sense of his kind and generous exertions for her sake, she regained her composure, her habitual resignation to the will of God, and her strength of mind. She could again pray and adore, and bow in mute submission to the divine decrees! — and she wrought unceasingly with her hands to add to John's comfort.

"At length our disastrous and inglorious transactions, civil and warlike, came to an end; and along with the remnants of other regiments, John

and poor Jeanie, widowed and childless, landed in the harbour of Greenock, and returned to the beautiful home which she had left, rich in her husband and daughter, in desolate and for a while almost desperate loneliness. She gazed with dry and heavy eyes on the same lovely islands spreading their reflections on the same lovely mirror, — the lake, like a waving banner, floated and curled round their shores as in other happy days; 'but oh! what am I now? and where are my joys?' was all she uttered.

"Time rolled on, and time blunts the sharpest grief. Old friends came about her, and John having obtained his discharge, returned to attend and watch her. I must, my good fellow, pay John the compliment of saying, in regard to his attachment to Jeanie, unaltered, closely shrouded through long years in his own faithful heart — that his 'was like the love of woman;' the like I fear is seldom found in man! After his return, I know not what time had elapsed during which he had watched over her like a guardian spirit, living but for her service, when at length he ventured to ask her to become his wife, to give him the power to be always with her, to shield, to shelter and provide for her during the rest of their days. He knew her heart was in Donald's unknown grave beyond the sea; he asked not her love, he asked but the legal, and by all acknowledged, right to be constantly by her side. After a short time she gave him her hand, while tears fell in streams from her eyes. Ever generous and just herself, she had never failed truly to estimate John's generous and noble self-devotion, especially now, when she became aware for the first time of his deep attachment, so long concealed and so bravely sacrificed to his friendship. His comfort and happiness, and the desire to prove to him her esteem and gratitude, became the aim of all she did; and she never seemed more beautiful or dear to him than when they sat together talking of Donald and bewailing his fate, while her tears were falling fast to his memory. She had a son, whom by mutual desire was named for him; and feelings almost akin to joy were awakened in her heart when this sweet innocent turned its face smiling upon her as she called it Donald.

"Peacefully and sweetly a year or two had passed away, when one evening, as they sat together, more blithe than usual, at their clear cottage fire, they heard a rapid step approach — and the door flying open, Donald entered! No spectral illusion — Donald, in face, in form, in voice, in heart. It is impossible for human language to describe the scene — far less the feelings of the heart-stricken inmates of that little dwelling. Jeanie stood stiffened, immovable, in excess of unutterable feelings. Poor Donald stood, struck for a moment, at the sight of feelings in Jeanie so unlike joy — then sprung with open arms to clasp her; but at the instant she fell lifeless on the floor. Whatever means love could suggest were employed by both her husbands to restore animation; but, when it returned, and when consciousness returned, convulsion followed convulsion till they almost wished she might die. These fearful visitations were, however, at length subdued, and she awoke out of a long, heavy, fearful sleep which followed them, utterly bereft of reason.

"Ere this took place, the two brave cousins had exchanged explanations, and John learned from his friend that, after he fell, he remembered nothing until he opened his eyes and found himself in an Indian wigwam, and an old Indian man and woman watching over him. What time had elapsed between his apparent death and that awakening, he did not know, but afterwards learned that while the other Indians, who had been hanging on the outskirts of the battle, were pillaging the dead and wounded, this old warrior, who had found his body among the slain, struck with a strong resemblance in Donald to a white man who had saved the life of his son, — caused in his work, and perceiving that there was still heat in the body — was rapidly carried to his home. The blood was stanchd, the wounds

dressed, and every Indian mode of surgery, medicine, and magic, employed to restore animation. It is an original part of human nature to love what we have saved, and these Indians felt it powerfully. Donald recovered slowly — recovered to receive the kindness of parents from the old warrior and his wife, and recovered to the consciousness of his hopeless situation. As he regained his health, he lost his spirits, and it was only after the lapse of years, when he had acquired so much of the Indian language as to understand and to make himself understood, that by the use of the powerful imagery with which his native Gaelic enabled him, by translation, to assail, in his own tongue, the feelings of his generous Indian benefactor, that he at last prevailed on him to favour his return to the white man's land. When the Indian, after many severe struggles with the strong affection with which he had taken Donald as a son to his heart, had been at length induced to consent to his departure, he did not do the thing by halves, but gave him a strong escort, and amidst the lamentations of the women, and the blessings, after their fashion, of the kind old man, he was sent off and safely conveyed to the nearest British settlement.

"When Jeanie's two faithful attendants found the sleep, which they had fondly hoped would bring about her recovery, terminate in so dreadful a manner, they united heart and hand in endeavours to do her good; to attend, to watch, to sooth her troubled spirit. She knew neither of them, though she often spoke of both, and of her dead and her living child, and wailed over all their miseries, till their hearts were like to break.

"I do not remember how long the poor young woman continued in this dreadful state, but it was many, many months, and there were many varieties and changes took place in her situation. At length a physician of eminence coming on a visit to the neighbourhood, heard the deplorable story of these three excellent people, and came to their cottage. He saw and prescribed for Jeanie; he gave much advice and many directions: and need I tell you how rigidly they were attended to and obeyed, or with what intensity of hope and fear their influence upon her was watched! The first symptom of improvement was her sleeping more quietly and frequently; and, after every sleep, they fancied they could see a nearer and nearer advance towards reason. At last they found her sitting bathed in tears, and Donald placing himself by her side, she laid her head on his breast, continuing to weep for hours, till she fell again fast asleep in his arms. Their native good sense held both the cousins perfectly silent during this critical period. No sound was uttered, nothing was done likely to excite too strongly the returning powers of mind or memory, and in the course of a few weeks, her reason was perfectly restored, — saddened — saddened beyond hopes of ever more knowing joy on earth; but the agonies which had overset her mind were gone, and she was calm and still. It was then they spoke to her of their relative situations, and appointed a time when she should decide which of them she would abide by. That time came, and the two unequalled friends, with throbbing hearts, waited her decision. She approached them slowly with her son in her arms, and as pale as marble. She went towards John, clasping the child to her heart. Convulsive sobs burst from her, and tears gushed from her eyes as she placed it in his arms — and with a violent effort quelling the fearful struggle in her breast, she expressed her deepest gratitude for all his affection and tenderness lavished on her in every circumstance of her lot — then turning to Donald, as she threw her arms about his neck, she sobbed aloud, 'I'll go with thee, my love.'

"Next morning, they set off for Greenock, where a ship was ready to sail with emigrants for Canada. In that vessel they took their passage, and their safe arrival was heard of, but I have never been able to obtain any farther intelligence of their fate. As for most admirable John, he up his little deserted home, and returned to live with his mother, who

charge of and reared his little boy. His sister was servant at Camstradden, that sweet dwelling on the south edge of the loch. With her I often spoke of John. It was then a strong household, of the amiable and worthy, both old and young. But Camstradden is now deserted—its halls are empty—its inmates far away, or gone to more enduring habitations—and the final fate of my noble and revered friend is probably hidden from me for ever.”

LITTLE PEGGY BAHN.

TRUDGING onward towards what, in former iron times, had been an important military station, the mellow roll of a bass drum, and the shrill wail of a bagpipe, reached us at intervals upon the soft summer breeze, and shortly after, two discharges of musketry, which rattled and reverberated among the surrounding hills, till the sound was lost in distance. The drum was silent for a time, and a sad stillness followed, which had—I do not know why—something very mournful in it. “*Aiel ma tuilli; we’re going away, but we’ll never return,*” said Simon, sighing; “I should suppose that must be a soldier’s funeral, some poor brave fellow’s mortal warfare o’er!” On turning the brow of the hill we were descending, the truth of his conjecture was shown by a body of highland soldiers slowly moving out of a church-yard, which, with its many mouldering heaps and gray grave-stones, lay before us on the plain below; and never can I express the effect upon my feelings, while the beautiful and sad notes of “*Lochaber no more,*” solemnly played by a fine military band, was pouring softly on my ear.

By the time we had reached the low wall which surrounded the burying-ground, the crowd were nearly gone. We stood in silence looking on the few that remained, and that few dropped away, till none was left but a tall soldier, who stood with his back to us, as motionless as the stones which surrounded him. At length he knelt down, and lifted in his arms from the new-made grave a little boy, whose sobs and cries now reached us, mingled with convulsive exclamations of “*O papa! papa! papa! Let me go to papa!*” Affected with one feeling, we entered the church-yard, and approached the spot without uttering a sound. The soldier, on perceiving strangers near him, turned his back, and held close to his breast the sobbing, exhausted child; who, on the least motion to quit the side of the grave, renewed his heart-piercing shrieks. “*O Allan, Allan, let me go to papa; you said he was gone to a good place, but they have put him into that hole; I want to go there—I want to go to papa. O papa, papa! don’t take me away from papa. “God help thee, little darling innocent orphan,”* said Simon, with tears gushing from his eyes! No human heart was proof against the tender influence of his beautiful voice, for it poured out the pure feelings of the most benevolent heart, and the proud soldier turned on him a face streaming with tears. “*Dearest child!*” continued Simon, “*you shall go to papa some time after this, but have patience, it cannot be just now.*” “*O papa, papa! Oh, let me, let me go to papa,*” repeated the poor innocent, raising his little hands and eyes in supplication, “*Oh, don’t take me away from my papa!*” “*Charlie, my darling Charlie,*” cried the soldier in an agony, “*have you forgotten your mother? What will your dear mother think of your staying away so long from her?*” “*Oh, mother knows I am going with papa. I told her I would never leave papa—oh, let me go to papa!*” “*The child is so worn out,*” said Simon to the soldier, “*that if you sit down and indulge him, he will soon fall asleep.*” This the young man instantly did, throwing a fold of his plaid over him to keep off the glare of the sun; and the little weary, exhausted mourner’s convulsive sobs and

heavy cries gradually subsided into sleep, not calm, but blissful in comparison of his waking wretchedness.

During the silence we observed, while the soldier lulled the poor child, he long and steadily fixed his mournful eyes upon Simon's face; and, at length, slowly and lowly repeated, "O Appin! O Lochaber! my mother's land! I have seen that face, and heard that voice in dear Appin or Lochaber! Am I looking at Simon Frazer? My own mother's dear cousin Simon!" Simon started to his feet, and seizing the soldier's offered hand, exclaimed, "And is it little Allan Stewart I see, war-worn and weather-beaten into a man before his time!" This was an affecting recognition to both, and several times the poor soldier repeated—"Oh, when you spoke to this poor child, even before I saw your face, it went to my heart. It was not like a cold lowland voice, it was the sound of home and of Lochaber!" "And who is this darling child?" said Simon. This question excited the young man's grief afresh. "Simon, O," said he, "I feel as if I were at home or in Lochaber when I am speaking to you, and am not afraid of your seeing my face wet with tears for my dear master's son, laid there in his narrow bed!" The child was now fast asleep, and cautiously rising with him in his arms, he proceeded by a back way to the desolated house of the new-made widow and orphan. We accompanied him to the door, and found its appearance most attractive, a little elegant spot. Who—casually passing its little flowery gate and porch, and windows twined round with blossoms—could have imagined or thought of the woe and desolation within!

In the evening Allan came by appointment to our lodgings, and after much conversation with Simon upon the family and fallen fortunes of his late master's father, he proceeded:—"You know, better than I can tell, that the ravages and burnings and harryings and massacres of '45, have left little more, from father to son, of the few remaining Appin Stewarts than their name. Some are tenants, some are even cottars on the estate of their fathers—but woe's me!—we'll not think of that. During the hottest of the war in Spain, a recruiting party having come to Lochaber, Charles, though scarcely seventeen, what with the true Highland blood in his heart, and the dread of becoming burdensome to his father and sisters, could not brook to live any longer idle in the glen, and without a word to any one but myself on the subject, he enlisted. There was a sad lamentation in Appin and Lochaber when the beautiful youth departed, and bitterly the kind heart of his father and sisters were wrung. But when the recruits marched through the glens with our bagpipes playing 'Lochaber no more,' among many a sad and heavy heart, none was sadder or sorer than the heart of his own sweet little cousin Margaret Stewart, though she neither spoke nor wept. She, so little and so fair, that we called her, in the glen, Little Peggy Bahn,* the name of the beautiful old tune so often played by the band at Fort William.

"You may be sure I did not stay behind my young master. I was so young, at first they would not enlist me; but the conduct of the boys under Stewart, at Maida, at last induced them to take me on. We were soon embarked, safely landed in Portugal, and, I may say, were marched directly to battle. I tried to be as much as possible with and near my dear master and comrades. But, oh! how different we found the regular fighting and battles of a vast army from what our young ignorant minds and burning hearts had fancied, from the descriptions of battles fought in the glens, where each man's individual valour brought each man his own share of applause and honour. But when thousands and tens of thousands are collected into one great moving mass, how fruitless and hopeless it seems

* White, or fair.

for a poor young friendless recruit to distinguish himself, confined, by the strictness of discipline, from ever daring to follow the impulse of his own bravery, although his heart were bursting with it! Yet we did find that even among those nearly countless multitudes, a man's and even a boy's character wonderfully soon becomes known, and the virtuous, steady, and brave are speedily marked. He did distinguish himself very soon, and was made a corporal on the spot, and shortly after a sergeant. While a sergeant, he had saved the family of a ruined Spanish nobleman from outrage, and as he positively refused to accept of money or other remuneration, the grateful man, determined not to let him go without some proof of his regard, went to a secret recess, and brought a small roll of canvass, which he obliged him to receive as a memorial of one he had eternally obliged, telling him it was a valuable Spanish painting, which had been saved from the rapacity of the French. This little precious roll, his first riches, was given in charge by his commanding officer to a friend returning to Scotland, and hither it was brought in safety.

"When fighting among the mountains, we seemed more at home, and many a time we blessed the idle days,—days we then thought idly spent in trying to run races up Ben-nevis. Little thought we at the time of the use we should have for the powers of foot thus acquired! One day, in a narrow defile among the mountains, our party was suddenly attacked by an ambuscade, the riflemen of which, taking aim at the officers, brought down captain, lieutenant, and ensign, at the first fire. 'Allan,' said my master, pointing to some distance, 'see yonder,' and I saw the ensign, on one knee, defending the colours against three of the enemy, even in the jaws of death. 'Follow me, Allan,' he cried; but before we could reach the spot, he was killed, and the ruffians, unable to unclasp the death-gripe of the fingers from the shaft of the standard, had with one blow cut off the hand. Still the colours were held fast, for the brave and blessed boy had so screwed and entangled the silk round and round his arm, which clung as with the spasm of death to his breast, that in their fierce and hurried efforts to tear it away, the whole body of that gallant son of a widowed and childless mother rose with it. At that instant we got up to them, with bayonets fixed, and my master setting a foot on each side of the ensign's body, fought there like a tiger, till there was a heap of dead around us. He then disengaged the colours from the valiant young arm round which they were wrapped, and waved them in the air. This contest for the standard had for a few minutes disengaged us from the rest of our party, and we saw with anguish that one part of the French were in possession of the pass, while our men were retreating, slowly, but still retreating, before another. 'Allan,' he said, 'let us try what we can do!' And mercifully at that instant we saw the piper, and the piper saw the colours, and in that instant he *did* change his tune! By a few desperate efforts we gained the summit of a rock on one side of the pass, and hurriedly fixing the standard in a high cleft, by main strength we rolled over a tremendous stone, which fell into the midst of the enemy crowded in the gorge below. Blessed be the piper and the standard! the very moment our men heard the joyful sound, and saw the colours waving on the rock, it acted like magic. Wounds, and grief, and shame, were forgotten; and like the wildest mountain goats they mounted the nearly perpendicular precipice. The moment they found footing on a stone that would shelter them, each in his turn took a station and poured in a destructive fire on the enemy, who were soon dislodged, and retreating from the pass, afterwards fell into the hands of the guerillas.

"Our first care was to look after the wounded, among whom we found the captain and lieutenant, both perfectly sensible, though faint from loss of blood and unable to move. What must have been the feelings of two brave

men so situated! They had the most confused idea of what had been going on, having supposed on hearing the pipes shriek out the attack and the firing commence, that some unlooked-for reinforcement had arrived; and on being told the real state of the case, nothing could equal their gratitude and admiration of my dear master's conduct. On this occasion he was made an ensign and myself a sergeant; and some time after, a beautiful little gold cup was presented to him by his regiment, and our colonel and all his brother officers gave him marks of their regard. After the battle of Thoulouse we got leave of absence; and high on the list of lieutenants, and higher still in the estimation of the regiment, he returned with a palpitating heart to Appin, where his little Peggy Bahn became his wife. She had suffered persecution during his absence, having unhappily attracted the regard of a Campbell, who came there in some capacity under government, and who thought he conferred upon her the highest honour and happiness a woman could receive, when he gave her to understand it was his intention to marry her. And his vengeance knew no bounds when he was rejected, I doubt not with secret horror, but without one outward expression of it. Finding that neither bribes nor threats could induce her father to use his authority over his lovely child in his behalf, — his revenge was sleepless until he had succeeded in persecuting him out of his farm and all his property; and having brought him to the verge of beggary, the fever of his mind brought on a violent illness which carried him off in a few days, and my good old master and the ladies took his little despairing orphan to their own home. There we found her on our return from the wars, and there we lived in perfect bliss a little while. But such bliss is not intended as the portion of this life. The foe of mankind escaped from Elba, and once more we said farewell to Lochaber. At Waterloo my dear master received a shot in his breast, — the ball was extracted, but it left a cough, and in the following autumn he came home to his old father, to his affectionate sisters, to his little Peggy and her infant son, strengthless and ghastly. I think the first sight of him carried death to his father's heart. He did not survive the shock a month. Then came the fierce fever of the *patriots* for reducing the army and navy. My dear master was in the second battalion. Of course, though he had fought his way to a company, all but his half-pay was lost. But he never complained. He thought the utmost he could do was only his duty, and all his promotions he received as the gift of his superiors. His native air, goat's milk, and a naturally fine constitution, seemed for a time to renovate his frame.

"He left the highlands with his darling little Peggy and her son, and established himself here, where he could obtain constant employment for his pen from the paymaster and adjutant of a regiment in the barracks. This, with the unwearied industry, ingenuity, and rational frugality of his little Peggy, enabled them slowly and cautiously to take and furnish a neat small house and little garden, in the most beautiful manner. He had brought the seeds of many plants and shrubs from the mountains and rocks of Spain, and here they were planted and grew. His precious wife's busy little fingers did all that could be done with needles and scissors, and through her ingenuity, old huge military trunks and boxes, and other lumber, were changed into handsome couches, sofas, and window-seats, made soft with cushions of coarse wool and heather, and covered with material of the commonest sort, to which her taste could give an air of elegance which is wanting in many an expensive decoration. His fine Spanish picture was handsomely framed, and, with his gold cup, his Waterloo medal, and his wound, made the sum of his acquisitions in the war. A small pension was granted him on account of his wound. But it was neither a lost leg, nor arm, nor eye; and though lost health is a greater evil than any of those, and though he would boldly have represented a similar case in behalf of a friend, he could ask nothing for himself.

"Here his wife brought him a daughter, and in the sweet society of these three beloved objects he was perfectly happy. But the enemy was mining all within. His strength decayed — his cough increased — and I observed him cautiously conceal his pocket-handkerchiefs from his wife. A sudden exertion brought all to a close. The injured blood-vessel burst, he vomited blood, became asthmatic, lost his voice, and a few days of suffering for himself, and agony for his wife, brought him — where you saw him laid to-day." Allan's lips and voice quivered as he drew near the end of his narration, the last words of which were nearly inarticulate. When he stopped, he threw back his head on his chair, and pressed his bonnet with both his hands over his face, from under which tears streamed, while his broad manly chest heaved as if convulsed. We all continued silent for some time, till Allan, pursuing the current of his own thoughts, exclaimed, "What is to become of her and her two infants, I cannot foresee. But I think she is dying. She never sheds a tear — never utters a groan; — she attends to the children — sees every thing properly done — but the stillness of death is upon her, something far more dreadful than the most violent grief. I think her fond young heart is broken or crushed beyond discovery by this fatal blow. But I must go," said he, starting to his feet, "I have been too long away from them," and (promising to return next night) he hurried away.

Next night, no Allan came. When it was wearing late, we were told a gentlemen from Sergeant Stewart wished to see us, and a grave genteel-looking youth was introduced. He spoke with the North-Highland accent, and said he had come at the desire of Allan Stewart, to explain the cause of his being unable to see us as he had promised. "Nothing unfortunate has occurred, I trust?" said Simon, looking anxiously into the stranger's face. The young man paused, as if he scarcely knew what to answer, and at last said, "They are all in the same health as when Allan Stewart saw you. But it is an old remark that misfortunes do not come single, and lest by any happy chance it should even so happen, you know our government has laid on the fearful tax upon death, which doubles and quadruples the miseries of the most miserable, even in an increasing ratio to the extremity of their wretchedness." "Has payment of that fearful tax been claimed even so soon?" said Simon. "Not payment," replied the stranger; "but the persons appointed for taking inventories, and fixing the value of the whole contents of a dead man's house, under the sanction of this statute of sin and shame, have thereby an appalling engine of vengeance in their power, such as no human creature should be trusted with, lest, as in the present case, they should be actuated by any malice against the dead or the living." "Oh," said Simon, with a heavy groan, and uplifted hands and eyes, "and in Scotland, the land of freedom — dare such things be done?" After a pause, he asked if the stranger "was intimate in the family, or knew what had happened." "I never heard of them till yesterday," he replied, "nor saw any of them till to-day. It is but a short time since I came to the lowlands as clerk to a writer in extensive business, and it is but two days ago, I learned that he is one of the legal extortioners for the collecting of this tax, the thoughts of which make my hair stand on end. Abhor it I did, as every rational being must, from the first moment I was capable of thinking — but never till to-day did I know the deep damnation of his deed who first imagined it, and so manoeuvred as to fix it as a permanent curse upon his country." "God bless you, my dear young stranger," said Simon, in great emotion, as he rose and gave him his hand. "Were you one of those who went to the poor young creature's house?" "I was," he replied; "I attended my employer as clerk to note the value of the property, which was to be fixed by a heavy old man who accompanied us as appraiser, but who, in reality, performed no such duty. The

various rates were all fixed by Campbell, my employer." "Campbell," repeated Simon, "can it be possible it was the man who ruined her father, and brought him to an untimely grave?" "The same," replied the stranger. "I have learned he bears a deadly grudge against the whole family, especially the poor young widow, whom having, on some former occasion, deeply injured, he of course hates with a fervour of hatred proportioned to the injury done or attempted." "You have not looked idly on human life," said Simon; "and is it possible the villain was cruel to the helpless girl in her desolation?" "Not personally," he replied, "for he durst not; but I will tell you all that passed.

"Before I came here just now, Sergeant Stewart told me had spent the early part of this day in removing from the house the traces of the mournful duties of yesterday; and, with the assistance of the servant girl, in restoring every thing to its wonted place and order, after having compared them with the inventories, which the accurate and methodical young woman had made out, of every article in their possession. After this, he had gone to give her up those papers, accounts, and keys, and found her for the first time sitting in weeds, with her two infants also dressed in mourning: the English clergyman's wife, with rational consideration for one too deeply wretched to think of any external symbol of grief, having ordered all that was needful. He had been exceedingly overcome, with this first sight of her, in her altered dress; and it was long before he could speak at all, although she, as he said, with the same immoveable serenity, as if a corpse were speaking, proceeded distinctly to discuss their business. This was scarcely over when a loud rude knock startled them both, and made the children shriek; her benumbed countenance assumed a look of terror, and she clasped her little, bloodless hands strongly together. The outer door having been instantly opened by the girl, they heard loud cheerful speaking in the lobby, — but the instant the sound of the voices reached her ear, she sunk back in her chair, her features shrunk, her eyes fixed, and Allan thought she was dead. Some undefined terror also filled the little hearts of her two poor innocents, whose cries were stilled, and they stood gasping and gazing upon her in silence. Allan snatched a restorative medicine which had been sent for his poor master, and poured some into her half-open mouth; she swallowed it, and soon after the appearance of death wore off.—'O Allan! Allan!' she said, as intelligence returned to her eyes, 'Oh, I know that voice! I have cause to know it! He has come here for some cruel purpose at such a time! Oh, the last time I heard that dreadful voice.'

"These were the first words spoken with anything like natural emotion that Allan had heard; and, though exceedingly perplexed and unhappy about this strange visitation, he felt comfort in again hearing the natural tones of her sweet voice. They heard the men go into a sitting room; and, commanding herself, she said to him steadily, 'Allan, go to these people; but you must make a promise before you leave me. You must promise not to answer them even if they provoke you. If you do, you will bring yourself into trouble, and bring greater poverty on these orphans. Remember what I say, you have always bravely resisted the enemy in the field, it is now your duty to resist the enemy in your own heart, and to conquer your passion. These men come on a sad office—they come to tax the widow and the orphan, because we have lost him who was our all upon earth. But Allan, God is still and ever our Protector in heaven.—Remember that we are ever under the eye of God. Submit to the laws, and keep your temper, for my sake, dear Allan, for my sake! and these little lambs!' In the strangest confusion of mind Allan left the room, quite unable to comprehend the meaning of what she had said, or what the laws had to do with his brave, dead master's house, who had died without owing any man

a farthing. As for myself," continued the stranger, "as we were approaching the house, I felt myself instinctively walking on tiptoe, lest I should make the slightest noise; but my two companions positively seemed to talk and laugh the louder as we drew near, and the moment we were within arm's length of the knocker, Campbell seized it and made it thunder till the very door shook. I could not restrain myself from saying that I thought a less ruffian-like noise would have gained us admission. — 'Think you so, my tender youth?' said he; 'my loud tattoo won't disturb the gallant captain now, you know, so do n't let it afflict your gentle heart.' A terrified servant girl opening the door at the instant, fortunately prevented my saying what I wished; and after a little reflection, I came to the determination to notice, with all my powers of attention, every item that was said or done, but not to utter one syllable, let them do or say what they might; and it was fortunate that anything has occurred to make me take and keep that resolution, for it was not easy! They drove past the well-bred, astonished servant, like wild cattle, and with rude noisy mirth, stood remarking on all they saw in the beautiful little lobby, on which, though I knew not the inmates, I scarcely could look without a tear, especially on hearing the deplorable cries of little children from one of the rooms — sounds which only excited their low and detestable efforts to be witty. Campbell kicked open the door of an elegant sitting room, the sight of which renewed their vulgarity and impertinence, — and the little servant girl, who had followed us into the room, seemed appalled and struck speechless with astonishment. At the moment that the savage tax-gatherer had, in spite of her remonstrances, set his heavy foot upon a fine fancy table, which creaked and quivered under his weight, while he attempted to tear a very beautiful painting by main force from the wall, a fine young soldier entered the room, whom I soon found was Sergeant Stewart. He called out in an authoritative voice to the fellow, who coolly cast a look athwart his shoulder at him, as he descended with his prize, and continued to converse with his companions, without deigning an answer to either man or maid. But Allan since told me, that look fixed him to the spot, for in the detested countenance turned on him for a moment, he recognised Campbell, the persecutor of little Peggy Bahn, as he habitually calls the young widow, and of her gray-haired father. He had a confused remembrance of having heard of a tax upon death, and a tax upon legacies, and that this bad man had made these the means of pillaging the little orphan; but, accustomed to the figurative Gaelic idiom, he had looked on such expressions as metaphorical. — He knew that this was Britain, that his kindred were among the mountains and glens of Lochaber, and though freedom did not live so wildly there as she once did, he knew that William of Glenco, and the other William, were years and years ago crumbled into dust, and never, even in his darkest imaginations, had dreamed that a horror like this was real! 'Very true, as you most justly remark, deacon, fine furniture and elegant, indeed,' were the first words Allan heard after he recovered the power of attention. 'A sumptuous dwelling, collector, and a costly, whoever paid the piper, as the saying is,' grunted forth this Mr. Deacon Convener of the Trades, appraiser and undertaker; 'no want of the craiture comforts here, collector.' 'Booty, booty,' rejoined the knowing collector. 'Here is some of it in its original shape! I have heard of this booty before now,' he added, with a sagacious scree to his throat. Allan chewed his tongue to keep it from cursing the calumniator aloud, and having fortified his patience by remembering his promise, he said respectfully — 'My master received that picture as a keepsake from a Spanish nobleman, whose house he saved from pillage and his family from outrage. He had positively refused to accept of any recompense whatever; and, —' 'H-e-m,' half-groaned, half-sneered forth the gurgling deacon, 'an easy towld tale!'

'Vastly,' rejoined the collector, with a jerk up of the eyebrows, and that air of easy careless superiority which marks that a man wishes to have it clearly understood he is above being deceived. 'But if it ~~were~~ true, it shows the cunning of the loopy dog.' 'Sir!' said Allan, with a voice and a glare and a stamp of his foot that made the room and its inmates start and shake. They both looked appalled — but Campbell first recovering his effrontery, addressed Allan with, 'Well, sir, what have you to say?' Allan had had a moment to think, and only said, calmly but sternly. — 'I warn you, sir, once for all, take care how you utter a disrespectful word of my master, now in heaven!' 'Man,' said the impudent villain, 'I was going to speak of the Spaniard;' stopping without being able to end the sentence. 'Were you?' said Allan, with an expression of voice so ludicrous, that I wheeled round on my heel to hide the irresistible laugh which convulsed my face. 'H-e-m,' gurgled the deacon, with a holy wave of his pendulous cheeks, 'hem! an idol offering! an idol offering; I misdoubt me much, collector! At first when it took my e'e, and I saw that raw o' bairns' heads round the feet o' the woman, I conceited that it might be Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not — but I'm sair misdoubting, collector, I'm sair misdoubting, it's a far ither woman, the scarlet woman o' the Revelations, collector, what think ye?' "

"During the deacon's critical discussions, the collector had been differently occupied, having the back of the picture towards him, on which were inscribed various memoranda. In reply to the deacon's doubts, he read the following — 'This picture of the Assumption of the Virgin was given me by —' 'Consumption!' broke in the deacon, 'consumption! my certie, the fient a look o' consumption's about her! Dark, but comely, collector, he, he! My certie,' he continued, scratching his elbow and then ramming both his fat paws into his top-band, 'a spankin' jaud she wad be, gin she had but decent shoon and stockings on!' But the deacon's words fell on deaf ears, for the worthy collector had been musing over another note scrawled on the canvass, then clearing his voice with a crow of delight, he read aloud, 'This picture valued in France at four thousand francs,' and again, 'The general offered me four hundred guineas for this picture; but I never will sell what, from the moment it was mine, I devoted to my love in Lochaber!' 'Love in Lochaber,' gurgled the deacon, through his fat throat, very much puzzled. 'A wealthy man, sir, a wealthy man, sir. Could sport with his hundreds, as poor you or I, deacon, could not venture to do with our penny pieces, deacon! Four hundred guineas to sport away on love in Lochaber; the hundredth part o' t would buy a good deal of love in Lochaber, I trow; he, he, he, deacon! guineas are not quite so plenty as love in Lochaber, I'm thinking, deacon!' In vain Allan bit his tongue. He seemed to grow ten feet high as he fixed his fiery eyes on Campbell's alarmed face, saying, 'Did four hundred guineas buy you much love in Lochaber — Duncan Breck Campbell?' He coloured nearly purple at these words, while the honest soldier's bright eyes still pierced him through; for it so happened that there was a sum of four hundred guineas, the property of little Peggy's father, which the villain got into his possession, and finally swindled him out of. At last, collecting all his impudence, he turned upon Allan, with the air of an offended person, and, 'What are you staring at, sir?' 'I am looking for an answer to my question,' said Allan, with the most irresistible simplicity of manner. Campbell wheeled about, biting his lip, and his face and hands quivering with rage and hatred, determined to have his revenge, as he cried, 'Come, deacon, come; we're wasting time here — and you, there,' as he would have addressed a slave; and raising his elbow in the direction where I stood, to intimate it was me he meant; 'jot down in the inventory one Spanish picture. Since four hundred guineas were refused for it, it may well be appraised at five hun-

dred pounds. Down with it, I say.' 'Och, the eedol, the eedol!' grunted the deacon, 'the unclean thing — the scarlet woman in the precious land of the blessed Maister John Knox — and the blessed and pious Maister George Bewhunon — Lord sain their memories! the land purged frae eedols wi' the bluid o' the martyrs, as the saying is, — and hech, sirs! here's mair papistry' — letting fall a Book of Common Prayer, elegantly bound, and wiping his greasy fingers on the window curtain, as if they had sustained pollution from the blessed book they had defiled. 'It is a handsome book,' said Campbell, 'it cost one guinea or two at least, whatever the picture did; down with it, — is it down at two guineas? Here's a four or five guinea Bible, down with that; come, let's lose no more time.' The books ranged in the shelves of a niche, were all in fine bindings, being mostly presents from many friends to the two tasteful young creatures, as their various inscriptions intimated; through these individually he ran, heaping guineas upon guineas faster than I could write. And, following the same system with every article in the room and in the house, *himself* appraised them all at the most enormous rates. So far was Allan from comprehending the purpose of this proceeding, that he felt gratified at the high estimation in which his dear master's property was held; and was often as much pleased as he was astonished at the romantic value put upon the old rubbish which his own ingenuity and his mistress's neatness and taste had vamped into the appearance of fashionable furniture. Through every nook and crevice, did these ruthless exactors rummage like rats; rating, at unheard-of prices, every kettle and pan and pot and old towel — nay, the very lumber in the loft of an out-house, stuff intended for burning, they mounted up to ten guineas, though no honest man would have given half a crown for it.

"On returning through the lobby, 'Here is another room,' said Campbell, going towards the door with a long stride and stamp. Allan instantly laid his clenched fist on the lock. 'It is my mistress's room,' said he, as he glared fiercely on the intruder; 'you must not enter here.' Campbell quailed for a moment under every movement of Allan's, they were so abrupt, and so fearless, and so unlike the common, every-day style of proceeding; — he was so powerful, and so brave, and looked at once so willing and so able to take vengeance upon him. But this was the natural cowardice of guilt. The lapse of a few moments restored his presence of mind and his effrontery. He knew he was safe from any danger of personal violence, and that he could at any time find means to revenge himself on a poor young soldier, who thought of nothing but the straight-forward open highway of honesty and truth. 'I must not!' he repeated, attempting, though vainly, to return the glare of Allan's eyes; 'none of your musts to me, sir. I care as little for your Stewart tartans and your Waterloo medal, as I do for your insolent eyes and savage trade that won it. I am doing my duty to my country and government, in the peaceable exercise of a peaceable office, and the law will protect me, so you need not expect to frighten me with a stare.' 'Where is the protection of the laws for those who need it?' cried Allan bitterly, 'when such as *you* dare enter the house of mourning, and outrage every sacred feeling, and violate the sanctuary of the helpless widow and orphan.' 'Oh,' said the brave Campbell, attempting to sneer and be witty, 'do'nt be afraid of the *sanctity* of your pretty widow. She shall be safe from —' 'Brute,' interrupted Allan, starting forward on him with such violence that the terrified villain recoiling, reeled to the wall. 'Allan, Allan!' said the soft voice of the poor girl within, 'open the door, and keep your promise.' Slowly and reluctantly Allan yielded to necessity, and as she closed the door of a closet upon herself and her children, he entered with the two legal executors of this *British law*. The deacon had taken no other part in what had passed,

than at intervals gurgling forth a few grunts of disapprobation or applause, as the case demanded, and during the fierce conference at the door, had stood aside in much fear and wonder; the cause of it evidently had never found its way into his fat brains. Campbell, with vengeance broiling his heart, soon assumed his assured indifference of manner, and as they entered, said, with a joyous look round, 'Another handsome apartment, deacon.' 'Neither scant nor want here — as the saying is,' gurgled the wise man. 'A handsome, snug, soft chair your holy widow enjoys in her sanctuary,' proceeded Campbell, kicking with his toe, as he passed, a seat fitted up by Allan out of an old round box, and covered by his mistress with leather stained by herself. 'Three guineas did not put that there. Down with it — three guineas, I say, and cheap it is.' 'A pretty seat and soft,' rejoined the gurgling deacon, through his disgusting wheezing windpipe, every word from which forced an involuntary instinctive cough and clearing of my own, as if that could have sufficed to clear out the foul chimney of the offensive burgher. 'A pretty seat, and soft,' he replied, turning round while he lifted up the skirts of his coat, and attempted to insert his clumsy flesh into it. But the castors, on which the worthy old box was set, with honest indignation, instantly rolled away from the protruded encumbrance, and the fat lubber fell, like a turtle on his back, upsetting the chairs in his wallowing efforts to rise again. 'Keep me, Baillie! what's come o'er ye, man?' cried Campbell, wheeling round at the din — but at the instant his whole attention was absorbed in the supposed fine chair, which Allan's activity had not managed to set up so fast as to prevent him getting sight of it. Curiosity and impertinence overcame even his desire of fixing high prices; and he rudely turned it over with many a low-muttered exclamation, and semi-oath. 'Ad save us! the mean beggarly wretches! all outside show! gilded misery and penury! What the sorrow is it! — me if it is n't some bit of an old rotten box! oh, the mean dirty Lochaber pride and vanity! the poor wretched whited sepulchres,' — 'But within ye are ravening wolves,' continued Allan in the same low deliberate tone: 'wo unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: verily ye shall receive the greater damnation.' The scribe did not find it convenient to hear this quotation, but proceeded to animadvert on the real nature of the poor furniture he had been rating so high; 'and to think of the ignorant Lochaber stirk,' he mumbled between his teeth, 'to hear all that rotten rubbish valued as if it had been real honest, genuine furniture, and never to say a word. But he's had his lesson, I warrant, and, since their pride is dearer to them than their penny, let them tak' it for their comfort.' This friendly soliloquy, carried on as he went about the room, turning up and turning over with foot and hand the various articles it contained, was partly heard — but was far from being understood by Allan — to whom the whole business of searching the house, taking an inventory, and appraising the furniture, was as yet an inscrutable mystery of iniquity and lawless power.

After going over every thing within the room, including the infant's cradle and little stool, on which lay her doll, the value of which was no doubt engrossed with the rest, — 'open this door,' said the savage, as he struck it with a stick in his hand. 'I cannot, and I *will not open* that door,' said Allan, with firmness. 'It is the last and only corner you have left my poor lady to shelter herself and her infants.' 'Open the door,' I say, reiterated he with vengeance in his voice. '*I will not*, so help me God!' said Allan. 'Oh, very well, as you please. I take you two witnesses he twice refused to open the door. Give me the punch;' which, seizing from my hand, he was proceeding to force the bolt, when it slowly opened from within, and the beautiful, even though ghastly spectre of its unfortunate inmate, with her infant in her arm, and leading her boy, walked sedately out with

scarcely a sign of being a living woman, but her mere motion. She fixed her large dark eyes in his face as she passed, and a livid horror spread over it as he stood transfixed, while Allan opened the door of the room for her. For myself I was awe-struck, and felt both grief and shame at forming a member of such a trio. The blood seemed to gush to Campbell's head as she disappeared, and changed the colour of the clay to purple, when, recovering his voice and his audacity, he exclaimed, 'Confound that woman's eyes! To think that a man should shiver before a thing like *that*! Deuce take her, I wish I had never seen her face!' This was not intended for Allan, but he heard it on entering, and raising his hands and eyes, and seeming to grow taller as he spoke, he solemnly said, 'The God who is present knows whether *she* has not cause to wish you never had!' There was evidently some accessible corner in Campbell's conscience, where horror, remorse, or terror could enter for a moment. But the fiend within instantly expelled the unwelcome intruders, and now, as formerly, when scared and smitten by Allan, he speedily recovered the start, and hid the trouble of his spirit under habitual impudence and cunning. 'Ho, ho,' cried he, 'you knew what you were about, Mr. Sergeant, when you would have kept us out of this recess. Open this scrutoire, I say. Open it,' he repeated, striking on the lock with his fist, 'or do you choose I should open it myself?' as he triumphantly held up the punch. 'You must wait till I bring the key, if you please.' 'I will not please to wait long, I can tell you,' he rejoined, and Allan had little wish to let them tarry there without him; but before he could return, Campbell had opened the drawers below, and was tossing out on the floor all his beloved master's wearing apparel, which two hours before he had arranged and laid away. 'You profane ruffian!' he cried, as he darted on him; 'stand back, I say,' and he swung him with one fling of his powerful arm into the middle of the room they had left. 'You villain,' vociferated Campbell, as soon as he had recovered his breath, 'you dare to deforce a king's officer in the discharge of his duty! The laws shall protect me, and to the laws I shall have recourse against the outrages of every such bloody-minded Lochaber rebel as you, born and bred to pillage and murder.' 'Duncan Campbell,' said Allan, with stern composure, 'you know that what you say is a calumny and a lie, and I care not for your foolish abuse of myself, but don't provoke me farther. I am only a poor soldier, it is true. But by all that's holy on earth and in heaven, I have the will, — I have the power, and I *shall* find the means, and that speedily, of bringing you to judgment for this day's deeds, and *yon* day's deeds, Duncan Breck Campbell, when you found that 400 guineas could not buy you love in Lochaber.' Campbell's colour went and came, and his lips quivered, while Allan, with his powerful eyes riveted on his face, stood as erect and motionless as a statue. He was evidently alarmed, and it was easy to see he felt himself in Allan's power. But though the natural man quaked and quailed, the habits of the scribe immediately came to his aid, and like other bullies, he could either threaten or cringe as he saw convenient. 'What makes you so violent, man?' said he in an expostulating tone, 'flying at a person in the discharge of his duty, like a mad highland ram. I tell you, sir,' as he continued, smoothing his ruffled neckcloth before a mirror, 'I tell you, sir, if you knew anything of the laws, you would know that your conduct to me this day is actionable, — yes, sir, highly actionable, sir, and subjects you at my pleasure to fine and imprisonment, sir!' 'Whether the law here means justice or power, they are both in my hands to-day,' said Allan, coldly, placing his two clenched fists on his sides; 'so look to yourself, and come with your action and fine and imprisonment if you dare.' He then quietly replaced the clothes into the drawer, and opening the scrutoire, stood by in silence. 'What's this? what's this?' said both vultures at once, and both gazed on a gold cup which stood there in a case lined with velvet. 'Mair

booty, mair booty,' grunted the deacon convener, daring once more to emit a sound from his unclean thrapple, the first since his heavy overthrow. 'Sacrilege, sir, no doubt the spoil of an altar,' said Campbell, with a saintly groan. 'Think ye so, Collector? Oh, the rapacious, bloody sons of Belial! rob the house o' the Lord—hech, sirs! there 'sawfu' folk in this worl'!' By this time Campbell had taken the cup from its case, and expecting to find some pious motto or appropriate verse of Scripture in the inscription, he began to read aloud, 'Presented to Ensign——' 'What the devil's this?'—'Presented to Ensign Charles Stewart by his brother officers, for his bravery in redeeming the colours of the regiment, having with his own hand killed several of the enemy, and saved——' 'Och chon! och chon! the bloody-minded man! Och, the Scripture sayeth true, the bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days! Och, och, his own hand! Och, the waste of human life!' 'Och, the bloody and tyrannical house of Stewart, as the saying is!' purred forth the pious deacon, with many a woful quaver of his flaccid jowl. 'Och, the price o' bluid! the price of bluid! a fearfu' bluidy offering to the evil one!' 'To the scales with it,' cried Campbell in triumph, as he laid it in the balance. 'A dainty bit heavy wee cup,' cried he, 'at 3*l*. 12*s*. per oz.; this will make a pretty sum, I think, not to say anything of the fashioning and cunning workmanship thereof; and here is another bloody toy,' said he, 'as he caught a glimpse of the Waterloo medal on the breast of a coat he had tossed out of the drawers.' 'Bluidy toy, indeed,' gurgled the deacon, groaning deep. 'Bluid and treasure, as the saying is, was poured out like water, and the tears o' the helpless widow and innocent orphan were shed, and the country impoverished, and the vitals of the poor wrung by cruel exactors, and devouring tax-gatherers, to purchase that bluidy toy, as you moost justly call it, collector—a bluidy toy, a meet gift for the bluidy men that got it—ochon! it has cost its weight in gold to Britain.' 'Very true—very well thought of—my good friend,' cried Campbell, whom the first part of the deacon's lamentations had obliged to cough very loud several times. 'Very well observed, Baillie, it has cost its weight in gold to Britain, fling 't in wi' the 'braw wee cup, my lad,' which accordingly was done, and both were weighed together.

Allan stood in deep rumination. Still, so perfectly Scottish were all his ideas and feelings, so inseparably knit together in his mind were freedom and justice and Scotland, that not an idea of the real truth had yet penetrated his imagination, strong and accurate as all his faculties were. 'Ay, Mr. Allan, you know what's what, I see. No wonder you tried to nick us out of a sight o' this bit treasure-house of a closet. So here we've another prize! more booty—more booty,' said the insolent ruffian, as he pulled a fine watch from a leather case. 'Ah, let an Appin or Lochaber man alone for the spulzie,' continued he, with a knowing wink. 'I think you would do well to keep clear of Lochaber,' said Allan, with most exasperating composure, 'in case I should make you appear there when you least wish it. Four hundred guineas will not buy your life a day, when I choose to tell of *that one* which you would give your remaining ear to see blotted from the calendar.' 'You insolent——' 'Take care of your tongue, Mr. Duncan Campbell, in case my dirk should lay the one you still have as low as that you left in Lochaber. I advise you to go on with your duty, as you call it. I am rather tired of your proceedings.' 'What's he saying about his dirk and Lochaber?' purred the deacon through the unoccupied crevices of his windpipe. 'Tut, an insolent whelp; he does not know what to say for spite,' interrupted Campbell, turning his back upon Allan, and with a knowing wink to the deacon, and a rub on the side of his nose, made the movement of emptying a glass at his mouth. 'Ho, ho, ho!' chuckled he, 'I understand you, Collector, ho, ho! that explains much that appeared very extraordinary to me since I entered this house. But

this has been a boon prize, as the saying is, — *nae deaf nits this, Mr. Collector*, caped and jewelled, sparkling wi' jewels, rich and rare gems indeed! 'Rich spulzie, i' faith!' said his fellow-labourer for the weal and glory of Britain. 'It was the dying gift of a friend to my master on the field of battle,' said Allan, sternly. 'These words are easily said,' sneered the enemy. 'Yes, for they are true,' cried the soldier in a voice like thunder, as he snatched the chronometer from the fat mole-paw of the terrified undertaker. 'Do you see the maker's name?' said he, holding the cap to the Collector's eyes. 'Harrison's watches are sold in all countries,' retorted he. 'And do you see its first owner's name, base infidel?' cried Allan, holding the inside of the outer case before him, 'do you see that glorious name, my master's friend? Do you know it? If you don't, go to St. Paul's, and you will learn it there.' 'Go to St. Paul's! oh, the awful heatlien,' groaned the deacon, waving his heavy dewlap to and fro, and holding up both of his fore-paws. 'All that but increases its value,' said the undaunted knave. 'Watch, chain, and seals must have been a handsome price, — a hundred guineas, a hundred and fifty guineas at least! down, there, with a hundred and fifty guineas, and we'll search these slips and drawers for the clink,' said he, chucking the gold chain and seal in his palm. In the said slips and drawers they found several small bills, in all amounting to somewhat less than 300*l.* which seemed to annoy them much; and they went off, moralizing on the folly and wickedness of those who spent all on the creature comforts, — the pomps and vanities, and naithing laid by for a sair fit, as the saying is. 'Ochon, ochon, the lusts, and the flesh, and the pride o' life! Hech me, hech me, Collector Campbell,' and he wagged his dewlap, and heavily groaned. 'Hech, but this is a vain world, a passing shaddy, that never continueth in one stage, — a watch of the night, a tale that is towld!' While the two heavenly-minded tax-gatherers were pursuing the pious current of their reflections, I took the opportunity of squeezing Allan's hand, and whispering that in two hours I would see him.

"As soon as I could disengage myself from the wolf's den, I kept my promise. A tap with the point of my finger procured me immediate admission to a house where all was so deathly still. Allan came to me in a state of the most extreme agitation and grief, and what appeared to me a strange instance of the correctness of his feelings and perceptions, in spite of the circumstances in which we had met, he unhesitatingly addressed me as a friend in whom he could confide, and who had come in kindness to pity and advise him. His unfortunate lady had explained to him the nature of their late visitation; and of the tax which had brought such a fearful species of visitation on this our native land: and the full amount of the evil, and the true cause of the high value put upon furniture, so much of which he knew to have been fabricated out of lumber, much of it old and useless, had instantly struck him to the heart; and the hardy soldier, although he did not know what had ailed him, seemed to have fainted, as the thought flashed into his mind that it was through his ignorance the villain Campbell had, unchecked, been allowed to make such unrighteous estimates. It was in vain that the amiable young woman had attempted to console him, as he said; her patience, her tearless eye, her wan lips uttering sounds that seemed to come from the dead, only aggravated his misery.

"Besides the picture, watch, gold cup, a miniature picture, some chimney ornaments, a few gold coins, and the bills, which he had estimated at a thousand guineas, he had valued the rest of the property at a thousand more; the inventory for which must be written and sent to the proper office on a stamp which costs the sum of seventy-five pounds. Next comes the legacy duty for the children of one per cent. on this two thousand one hundred pounds — twenty-one pounds; which, of course, leaves only two hundred and four pounds of the three hundred pounds, to which the bills and

gold coins amount; and that, in fact, is the only property which can be turned by the widow and orphans to real use; as no doubt she will never sell her husband's picture, gold cup, or watch, all which she values more than her life, because they were his; and would not die in peace were she not to leave them to his son. Even of those bills, though she and her infants were starving, she could not raise one shilling at the bank, unless through the good will of the banker, until all the tedious transactions consequent upon this infernal tax are settled. She has called in all the bills of the late heavy expenses — what must her situation be to find herself without the power to pay them!" Here the young man paused and laid his hand over his eyes.

Simon had long been in the most deplorable agitation, and was silently pacing the room with his eyes fixed on the floor. After a few minutes, our visitor went on: — "Doubtful as I am of its being possible to obtain any redress, I did not know whether it would be right or wrong to excite hopes in worthy Allan's breast, which I feared might never be realized. But he appeared so bitterly desperate, that, fearing the fever in his mind might be communicated to his body, I thought it proper to use every honest means to abate his present distraction. I therefore told him that though my chief design in coming to him was to express my sorrow for his situation, and to exculpate myself from all participation in the transactions in which I had been obliged to act as clerk; yet, it had occurred to me, there was such manifest injustice in the manner of appraising the property, that I thought there should be a valuation made out of every article by a sworn appraiser and upholsterer, and forwarded immediately to the proper court, along with a distinct representation of the whole transaction — it surely ought to have some effect in procuring redress. He started up and seized both my hands, but was unable to speak, so deep and strong were his feelings. I asked him if he knew of any other memorandum or proof of the Spanish picture having been a gift of Captain Stewart's to his wife, besides the few words on the back. This he did not know, but would endeavour to ascertain, as I told him what had been presented as a gift to the lady of course was hers — and therefore could not be liable for duty as a legacy. Allan's eyes seemed to awake from the dead as I spoke: 'Then, sir,' he said rapidly, 'I can tell you of much more that was hers, both by his own gift and the gift of others; look at all these books, more than the half of them are hers, and have her name upon them; that fine watch, with its chains and seals, is hers. I know he gave it her years ago, and there is one of the seals, which I heard the officers call a yellow diamond — it was uncut when he got it — and before sending it to his cousin — which was all her relation to him then — he had her initials and crest engraved on it, and little Peggy Bahn, in Gaelic, on a scroll, like a motto. He never wore that watch, for his own is a fine one too, and if I am not much mistaken, it will be found in the sob of the clothes he wore the day he was seized with his last illness — those fiends had these very clothes out on the floor, and might have seen the watch but for my fury on seeing their audacious proceedings. I had no intention to conceal it, for I never recollected it till this moment. Another article, a Brussels carpet, I heard them value at a great sum, fifty or sixty guineas, never was his at all, but was a present to his wife from a rich Brussels manufacturer, on whom we were quartered after he received his death-wound.' Allan rose, passed across the room, and sat down again. 'This kind old man, and a sister who kept his house, treated my master, as all did who knew him, as if he had been their own son; and he having performed some valuable service for them, the old man talked to me of his intention, asked me how to address this fine carpet to my lady, and it was put up along with our baggage in the military wagon, wrapped in the curious matting which covers the lobby, on which these men fixed

some astonishing value. My master never heard of or knew anything whatever of the carpet, till our baggage arrived in Lochaber.

"I took notes of all Allan said as to the real prices that part of the furniture, which was new, actually cost, and found Campbell had, in most instances, valued it at five times the amount, in others at ten. 'That fine table,' said Allan, 'which you saw the ruffian stand upon; what do you think it is made of?' I told him I did not know, it seemed to be some very fine foreign wood. 'The root of a Lochaber birch,' said he, 'stained, I know not how, and then polished and varnished by the herdsman's son, who came to the lowlands, to be a painter. I think it cost twenty shillings. The green marble table, and the two marble chairs in the lobby, cost in all about half-a-guinea, being made by myself, of the most humble materials, and painted by the same boy. These seats there, which the two scoundrels called ottomans, and had so much villanous wit about, are neither more nor less than great old packing boxes; the seats are stuffed with coarse wool and goats' hair, and the covers are sheep and goat-skins dressed and stained in Lochaber, by the little nimble hands of sweet Peggy Bahn and the herdsman's son. The whole were made as you see them, by our joint labours, and many happy hours we spent in the work.' His feelings again overcame him. But turning from that subject, he went on. 'I heard them value the silver forks at some extraordinary rate, far more than I know they cost when new; at any rate, they are my mistress's. When our battalion was disbanded, the mess-room plate and other furniture were disposed of by lot. It was rather a melancholy job to some of us — but soldiers make mirth out of strange subjects sometimes, — the silver forks fell to the Colonel. After a moment's pause he said to my master, 'Come, Stewart, relieve me of these things, I have dozens at home already; you are setting up house, take them to your young wife, my good fellow.' On my master's objecting, he took a large sheet of paper, tumbled them all into it — addressed them to my mistress with his best wishes, and signed his name, after which he sealed the parcel and handed it to me. If I am not mistaken, —" Allan started up and sprung out of the room; in half a minute he returned with a parcel; 'Yes, here it is, the identical paper, address, signature, and seal — the forks have lain in it ever since.'

"I need not go over all the articles," continued the young man, "which I have here noted down, and which either should not come at all under the grasp of this disgraceful law, or were overrated by Campbell, and I have come to you, by Allan's desire, to consult as to what should now be done.

I never saw Simon in such a state. He was utterly cast down. Every duty and tax, however heavily it pressed on himself, he always paid without the slightest murmur. And, when he heard others grumble, it was his custom to argue with them till he made them contented. "If you wo n't or can't pay taxes," he would say, "do n't stay here; go to the wilds, go away with Birkbeck, or some other new settler, and try the difference between security and rational freedom, and justice, and all the unnumbered, unutterable blessings of civilized life, and the bitter life of suffering and bondage of nominally free countries, where all are under one fearful law — the law of the strongest! Every thing in this world has its price, and you will soon find it best to pay the price of our taxes for these comforts in our own happy country, which, take it all in all — is the best — best — best, dearest in the world!" But now Simon, for the first time in his life, was dumb, for he was as upright and clear-headed as he was enthusiastically loyal — and he would not call evil good or good evil for any consideration. He was utterly stunned with the glare of the horrid light that now broke in upon his mind, with the fearful conviction that there actually and indisputably did exist a law, in perpetual force — operating every instant throughout the whole empire — through his own beloved Scotland, of which he was so proud,

making it a man's duty to enter the house of mourning, to trample over the bleeding hearts of widows and of orphans, of brothers and of sisters in the extremity of their wretchedness, — a law, which, setting every tender feeling of delicacy towards the dead and the living at naught, setting every feeling of honest pride at naught, dares to empower any man to violate the sanctuary of a private house, and wring the feelings of innocent sufferers by an examination and exposure of every recess, of every depository, every paper, every concern, however sacred, however secret, however ruinous such exposure may be. All their poverty, all that they have, and all that they have not! — “Oh!” cried Simon, wringing his hands, “this is bad, this is utterly abhorrent and intolerable; but to think this should be done for the purpose of pillage! the British government pillaging miserable new-made orphans! — screwing the means of existence from the widow! — Oh! even the dying widow of a brave young soldier, who died in the service of his country — to send his infants to beg bitter bread — poor, starving, and forlorn! — and yet I am in Scotland, the land of Wallace and Bruce, the land of stubborn freemen, who have, God knows! spent their blood and their toil and their lives for causes which, in comparison of this dreadful tyranny, this Protestant Inquisition, were as the small dust of the balance! This is no matter of opinion, which, while the world exists, will vary with the varying faculties and situations of its inhabitants. It is a frightful reality — an appalling visitation, which, like fire, flood, pestilence, and famine, every individual must be eager to escape.” “All you have said is too sadly true,” said our new friend. “I know there are many men who, in the fulfilment of this most odious office, go through it with all the forbearance and tenderness it will admit. But, during my own short course, I have already known of many cases of extreme oppression. I was acquainted with a farmer who died young, leaving a young widow and several little children: — but he had the consolation of thinking he left them in comfort and independence. He was hardly buried, when the inquisitors arrived; inspired, as in the present case, with private hatred. The young woman had never heard of such a law. Her mind was weakened by grief and long night-watchings, and seeing three men, of no friendly demeanour, enter the house, she was seized with a violent nervous terror — supposing them officers — misnamed *peace-officers*, — come to arrest the property for debt. She saw or heard that they took written lists of every article of every species; that they demanded her keys, that they opened every drawer, chest, press, repository, desk, — rummaged through all her husband's papers, read his will, and going to the out-houses, she was informed the same scrutiny went on there. The idea took possession of her mind that the property was all under arrest, and no power or argument could ever after eradicate it. The slightest appearance of hurry or confusion nearly convulsed her with the apprehension of being immediately carried to jail: and a loud knocking accidentally at the door threw her into delirium, which in the course of a few weeks ended in a fever, and she was carried to her grave in about three months after her husband. Then came a repetition of this domestic curse, and such was the style in which the inventories, in both cases, were made out, that, after much disturbance, the summing up of the matter was this, these unhappy little orphans were left with only 40*l.* of the respectable competency provided for them by their poor father; they were thrown upon the mercy of strangers; the eldest was taken as a herd, and the younger ones now hold a sort of middle state between beggary and servitude in a poor man's house. Now, *this passed under my own eyes*. I have known the gentlemen who hold large salaries in the office for conducting the details of this law, pursue, and persecute with threatening letters, miserable people, at a distance, the whole amount of whose property was but 24*l.* — So inquisi-

tionally minute and rigid are the details they exact and obtain.* I am acquainted with a family of daughters of superior rank, whose parents had more gentility than wealth, and who, latterly, had lost their all by the fell sweep of a fashionable bankruptcy. However, tender affection for their parents and noble pride stimulated these ladies to the most incredible efforts, and, without losing their rank, by toils of head and hands which were never seen and scarcely suspected, they cheerfully contributed each in her own way to the general good of the family. Rents were paid, furniture, as it wore out, was restored, every thing was kept in order, and they owed no man anything. Their little savings, these unsuspecting and dutiful girls placed in a bank in their father's name. Alas! he died, and, in the midst of their overwhelming grief and their mother's desolation, came the death-tax like a blight of horror on their hearts. Like many others, they were taken utterly by surprise: they had heard of a legacy-duty — but knew not — thought not — imagined not — nor could ever have believed there was anything like this.

"Every thing they possessed was taxed. There was no will — that caused of course a more expensive stamp — and stunned into absolute stupor, they knew not what to do, like many, many others! On the most worthy, the most delicate in mind, the most unable to bear and to spare this barbarous exaction, it ever falls most heavy, for such are unable to make exertions for their own security. The tax, even on their own money in the bank, was paid. Their mother sunk into bad health, and, after lingering for a year and a half, she too died — and there again — like the mysterious visits of a fiend or an evil genius — there again stood the two gatherers of death. It would be but a repetition of miseries to detail the rest — the tax was paid! At present, I understand, the eldest sister is dying. Of course, when it pleases God that she goes to join their parents, the tax-gatherers will pillage the rest for the good of the British empire!" Simon started to his feet. He strode rapidly to a window, and looked out, then he hurried to another, as if he wished to ascertain whether or not he was awake — and whether he was indeed in Scotland. At last he calmed himself, and sat down, saying, "This is folly. Since the great and powerful of the land, the free, proud, and independent noblemen and gentlemen of England and Ireland, and *hitherto* unconquered Scotland, can submit to this disgrace, — since citizens and country gentlemen elect such members for our parliaments as can endure such a law to be made and such a law to continue, it is not for a poor pedler like me to rack my brain into phrensy with schemes for its repeal. Yet oh, Eternal Father, surely the universal cries and groans of thy oppressed mourners have reached thy throne *above* the heavens! and surely those deep deep groans shall yet reach the throne on earth! As certainly as I believe my own existence, is my belief that when the king gave his sanction to the act for raising the legacy-tax, he was unconscious,

* It very often happens that there are debts owing; for the amount of which even this law admits that survivors have a claim, free from the tax on the estate of the deceased. But no vouchers, of the existence of such debts, are, in this office, accepted as valid proof of this claim, except stamp receipts. Of course, as no money can be legally drawn from a bank till the tax is paid — money must be borrowed to pay them, before such receipts can be procured. You may suppose that sending a receipt for the sum total of each such debt, might be enough. — But it is not so. So rigidly upright are those servants of government in the execution of their duty — that they not unfrequently demand a statement of the particular articles in each account. And I have myself been forced, with much shame and an aching heart, either to pester shopkeepers for the items of such accounts — or agonize the individuals of unfortunate families, in the depth of affliction, by a scrutiny into the petty — and often humiliating details — of the prices and dates at which so many pounds of sugar, or soap, or beef, or mutton, or bread, and all the other minutiae of domestic wants, were got, — not to mention the yet more painful details of what especially belonged to the deceased parent, brother or sister! Is it so much to call this court an Inquisition?

as you or I were of the infamous clause in it on which his servants have framed this most oppressive, tyrannical, and accursed law, — one of the most dreadful effects of which is its overwhelming, in their utmost need, and rendering unfit for effort, those who are its most deplorable martyrs, and whom, like this young creature and her infants, it most especially ruins."

We now resolved upon having a new inventory and appraisement of Captain Stewart's effects, made out without loss of time, by a sworn appraiser of established character, attended by a cabinet-maker, and a man of the law; and having arranged our future proceedings as correctly as we could, at a very late hour our new friend bade us good night, after telling us his name was M'Donald, and leaving us deeply impressed with the conviction of his goodness of heart and principle. At a very late hour we retired to our sleepless pillows. All night I heard the worthy old man tossing awake or pacing his room, and when we met in the morning, he bore traces of grief and watching. The day was spent in taking the proper measures for having an appraisement of Captain Stewart's effects honestly made out, and in waiting with solicitude on the accomplishment of that important work. Before evening it was done in the most satisfactory manner, an excellent young lawyer of M'Donald's acquaintance acting as clerk. A man of probity in the town council, acquainted with the value of furniture, attended as a witness and a friend, and when the whole value, after deducting what was exclusively the property of Mrs. Stewart, amounted only to about 700*l.*, including the amount of the bills. The gold cup was found to weigh only four ounces, and was valued as bullion. It was proposed, in making out the statement, to particularize the real and pretended value of this one article, as one instance of the manner in which the first appraisement had been made out. It was in vain that our anxious hearts burned to have the business brought to an immediate close; the law's delay and the needful forms of business, forced upon us, however unwillingly, the conviction, that *there* we could not stay so long as to see the end of it, and we proceeded on our journey.

Worthy Allan, his young face clouded with care, and our other excellent friend, M'Donald, gave us a convoy. M'Donald had, of course, taken no conspicuous part in Mrs. Stewart's affairs; *that* his present situation with Campbell would have rendered improper; and he now told us he feared Campbell had heard of the new appraisement, for he was hurrying on the business in gloomy silence, and the worst might be apprehended from his active malice, aided and impelled by the terrors of detection. The utterance of this last word seemed in an instant to rouse the lion in Allan's heart. With one of those looks under which Campbell so often quailed, and, as he stamped on the ground, clenching both his fists — "Detection! and he shall be detected," he exclaimed, with all the dreadful energy of Lochaber, his mother's land, — he struck his brow, exclaiming, "Infernal agent of an infernal law, down, down, down! ten thousand fathoms down, loaded with the widow's groans, the orphan's tears, the dead and dying soldier's bloody curse!" and, without an instant's pause, he turned and hurried back, so full of his own feelings and intentions, that for the moment he seemed to have quite lost sight of Simon and myself. We and M'Donald stood appalled for an instant — then bidding us an affectionate farewell, he hurried after him, while we pursued the most sad and silent journey we had ever taken together.

All Simon's feelings were keen, and well it might be said that when he erred, his failings were but virtues in excess. If he had an idol, it was his country. Britain as a whole, but Scotland clung to his heart, and his heart to Scotland; and anything that threw disparagement on that dear land of his fathers, or its laws, its government, or its people, stung him to the quick. His horror at this newly-discovered tax upon death, seemed to have

shaken his very soul. During a week he scarcely spoke, and the tones of his voice were so sad, and his sunny face and bright smiling eyes so thoroughly without a gleam, that I became quite unhappy about this, my more than parent. In the course of five weeks we arrived at a town at which we had given M'Donald our address, in case he should have anything interesting to communicate, and it was with no little agitation that we found a very large packet awaiting us there, which without preface I transcribe.

"My dear friends, in compliance with your wishes, I have set myself down to give you a detail of some of the circumstances relative to poor Captain Stewart's family, which have occurred since the evening we parted. At that time I followed Allan Stewart with all my speed, being actually alarmed at the manner in which he had left us. I only got up to him as he was entering Mrs. Stewart's door, his cheeks flushed and dry, and a gloomy fire in his eyes. As soon as his footsteps were heard in the house, the beautiful boy came bounding to him and sprang into his arms, the little infant, too, came tottering to hail him, and he sat down with both of them on his knees, and there they fondled and prattled and expressed their innocent love, by many little tricks and arts. He leaned his burning cheek on the boy's curly head, and remained silent with his eyes closed. At length, with no little joy, I perceived tears stealing from under his long eyelashes, which I welcomed as the prelude to a calmer state of mind, and instantly occupied myself with a book, that I might not seem to have observed him. After a time he began to reply to the chat of the two innocents, and then entered quietly into conversation with myself. I mention all this, because I think from the state he was in at our parting, you must have apprehended him to be on the verge either of delirium or a fever. He spoke no more of Campbell that night, and I was anxious to avoid a subject so hateful and irritating to us both. I saw him occasionally through that and the following week. He was calm and very thoughtful, and asked my advice as to the speaking to the paymaster in the barracks about the means to pursue for obtaining a pension for his master's widow and children from the Waterloo fund. I was rejoiced at this proposal, for the paymaster is my mother's cousin-german, and as I have always been intimate with him, I hoped to further Allan's views in that quarter. I therefore lost no time in waiting upon my relative, who is an excellent man, and I laid open to him the case of the amiable young widow, and all that had lately occurred. Being well acquainted with Captain Stewart, who had often written for him, he listened most willingly, and entered warmly into the interests of his family. With this information I hastened to Allan. He was sitting with many papers round him. He said he was arranging some old family matters, which had been too long overlooked. He thanked me most cordially for preparing his way to the paymaster, and said he would call on him next morning. Next morning, as the town clock was striking ten, and we were all taking our places at our desk, Allen knocked at Campbell's office door; the youth who opened it, in answer to his demand to see his master, replied, according to orders, that he could not see him at present. 'Tell him,' said Allan, 'I must see him!' The lad passed into the sanctum, where the great man sat, and repeated the words. 'Must see me!' retorted he, with mingled rage and scorn. 'Tell the fellow—' but the words died in his throat, for at the instant Allan, in full uniform, with high bonnet and feathers firmly fixed on his head, strode into the room like a colossus. In his right hand he held a letter, and in his left a roll of large paper like a map, and another large letter with a large seal. The colour went and came in Campbell's lowering and gloomy face, but he had time neither to speak nor recover his audacity, for Allen without moving his bonnet or raising his finger to his brow, instantly proceeded, as he laid the letter in his right hand with a rap on the desk before Campbell, — 'That

is for you, — this and this are for my use,' as he touched the roll and the letter in his left hand, — 'decide for yourself.' And, as he left the room, he looked half over his shoulder, saying — 'To-morrow is market-day.' His appearance was so unexpected, so short, and his departure so sudden, and the whole apparition so unlike the visits of ordinary life, that I felt myself gazing in amazement at the door through which he had departed for some moments after he was gone. He never looked at me, nor do I believe he saw me or anything else in the house except Campbell. From the window I saw him march off along the road to the barracks, and my very soul burned with impatience for the moment of emancipation, that I might go to the paymaster, and try to learn the solution of this mystery. As to Campbell, in no very pacific voice, he roared with an oath to one of his underlings to shut his door, and we saw little more of him that day. As soon as it was possible, which was not till late in the evening, I spanked off to the barracks, and found my friend. The instant I entered, he cried out in a sort of rapture, 'Well, Allan Stewart has been here, and an able fellow he is.' I told him of his apparition in Campbell's writing-room, and that I was burning to know what he was about, — upon which he gave me a detail of all that passed, which I will endeavour to repeat to you. Being accustomed to go upon business between Captain Stewart and the paymaster, he was soon admitted to him, — and, indeed, being in himself so perfectly respectable and known to be faithful and so brave, — all who knew him received him kindly. With his bonnet laid upon the floor, he stood before the paymaster in much agitation, from which the good man relieved him by entering on the subject, and promising to further his wishes to the utmost of his power. 'Thank you, sir, most humbly,' replied Allan, 'you know my dear master as certainly died of the shot in his breast which he received at Waterloo, as if he had left his corpse upon the field. He never received anything but a very small pension, for no one represented his case, and he would ask nothing for himself. Now he is gone, — villains are pillaging his house, — his wife is dying of grief, and his infants must be reduced to want.' It was with much difficulty Allan finished the sentence. After recovering his voice, he added, 'Were his colonel or lieutenant-colonel at home, I know nothing that *they* could do for him would be wanting, but they were sent abroad, I may say, almost from the field of battle.' The paymaster gratified him by doing ample justice to the noble character of Captain Stewart, and promising soon to put him on the best plan for obtaining a pension for his family. 'And with respect to the papers in your hand, are they on the subject, or do you wish to consult me about them?' continued the paymaster. 'They are on the subject of my master's affairs, sir,' replied Allan. 'It is a letter I have written to a villain, who has robbed and wronged the family, a lawyer, sir.' 'Take care what you write to a lawyer, Allan, especially one you call a villain.' 'I have taken care, and yet I call him villain, as *you* would, sir, I am sure, if you knew him.' 'Have you consulted M'Donald?' 'No, sir, I never spoke to him of it. It would not be fair to either of them, M'Donald is in his employ.' 'In very truth, Jack,' said the paymaster, 'Stewart is a noble lad. You see he would not do what he thinks unfair even to the scoundrel.' 'And have you called him villain in that letter, Allan?' he continued. 'I have, sir.' 'May I see it?' 'Certainly, sir, if you will take the trouble,' and he handed the great roll to the paymaster. 'This a letter! it is more like a public writ, or a deed in Chancery.' 'It is a copy, sir, you will understand it, sir, if you are so good as to look it over.' The paymaster, with much curiosity and astonishment, read over worthy Allan's brief, expressing his feelings by many exclamations and stamps of his foot as he proceeded; and, when done, cried out, 'Well done, Allan, and have you given him his letter?' 'I have, sir, and this is for the

market cross—to-morrow is market-day.' 'And what think you, will he do?' 'I do n't know, sir. He is a coward as well as a scoundrel.' 'But, Allan, he will get it torn down.' 'I will keep guard beside it, sir, and explain it to all who can't read.' 'Well done, Stewart! and that letter in your hand?' 'It is to the lord advocate, sir, and contains a copy of that.' 'Allan,' said the paymaster, his voice crowing with delight, 'I'll be bound you'll conquer the lawyer! My worthy fellow, trust me with this paper till the afternoon. I'll make no bad use of it.' 'I'm not afraid, sir,' he replied. The paymaster nodded kindly to him, bidding him call in the afternoon, and the soldier withdrew.

"As soon as Allan was gone, off sped the paymaster to the colonel's quarters, carrying Allan's brief. He told him of the visit he had had, and the purpose of it; told him of Captain Stewart, and of his admirable character, and great bravery; and that he had, after lingering for three years, died of the wounds he received at Waterloo. After enlarging on the particulars Allan had so briefly stated, the paymaster proceeded with the history of the letter to Campbell, written by the young man, Captain Stewart's clansman, who, though but a sergeant, was seemingly the only effective friend left to the family. He then presented the colonel with Allan's large roll of paper, which they read between them with all the enthusiasm of two soldiers in a soldier's cause *versus* a lawyer. And I subjoin a copy of the letter, which the paymaster kept.

"SIR,

"I give you twelve hours to consider and determine whether you will pay back to the heirs of the late Kenneth Stewart of——, in Appin, the four hundred guineas of which you defrauded him in the year 1812, with legal interest from that time. As also the sum of seventy-nine pounds, wrongously paid by you to the Stamp Office, over and above the lawful sum due for the government stamp upon the personal property of the late Captain Charles Stewart, which amounted to no more than 15*l*. I give you, I say, twelve hours from the date of this letter, to determine whether you will instantly pay, or give bond for these sums—or abide the publishing of this letter, in whatever way I shall think fit.

"It would be of little avail to a cause, even so good as the present, that you know, and that I know, you, Duncan Campbell, did swindle Mr. Kenneth Stewart out of the said sum of four hundred guineas; if I could not bring proof sufficient to condemn you of that, and worse crimes, in any court in Great Britain. Among other proofs which I possess and can command, is your own admission of the fact, written with your own hand, and with your own sign and seal, in a letter to the above worthy man, where you promise 'to pay him down the four hundred guineas in gold, which you have so long withheld, the instant he gives his consent to your marrying his daughter.' Vainly also would I vent my own abhorrence of a villain, and expose myself to his revenge, by accusing him of an attempt to carry off by force, Margaret Stewart—that unfortunate Kenneth Stewart's only child, after his determined rejection of your detested proposal, that he should sacrifice her to you in a forced marriage,—if I could not bring witnesses from the Highlands to prove the fact. But there yet lives Robert Morrison and his son, whom you attempted to bribe to assist you in your outrage. And there yet lives Allan Dhu Stewart, the herdsman's son, who, through your agency, was employed to send his master's daughter to a distant glen by a false message from a family in distress. There yet lives Allan More Stewart, the herdsman, who came to her rescue on hearing her shrieks, as you attempted to heave her across a horse's back—and—Duncan Campbell—there yet lives Morni, the herdsman's gallant dog, who tore off your right ear in defence of his injured master's innocent child.

He, too, will come; and I will forfeit every claim against you, if he does not, in remembrance of that outrage, seize upon you in the midst of a thousand people whom he never before saw.

"With respect to my charge of a wrongous estimate of my late master's property, it would, like all the rest, avail me less than nothing, if I could not bring legal proof. I am here ready to swear, before my God and my fellow-creatures, that — — —, undertaker and deacon-convener of the trades, who attended you in the capacity of appraiser, did not in any single instance give even an opinion as to the probable value of any article. I am also ready to make oath that you alone fixed the amount of the price of each. And — — —, the cabinet maker, and — — —, the sworn appraiser and auctioneer, the day after that iniquitous transaction, when all things within the house remained as you left them, having seen and carefully examined every article, after abstracting those which there is legal proof were the exclusive property of Captain Stewart's wife, — are ready to make oath that the value of the property, including a bill for 300*l.* is not more than 720*l.* thereby reducing the stamp, as above stated, to 15*l.* I am also ready to make oath that you weighed Captain Stewart's gold cup with false weights, having reported it ten times heavier than it is. And that you weighed a piece of silver, his Waterloo medal, along with it, and charged it as gold.

"These are the facts which I can prove. Choose whether you will have them exposed at the market-cross here — and in the Court of Justiciary — or refund the money you have embezzled, before twelve hours after the date of the letter are expired. I am,

ALLAN STEWART.

1818, 10 o'clock, A. M.

"What is this about a gold cup?" asked the colonel. "It was given to Stewart by his regiment, as was also a sword and dirk and pistols, and so forth — when he was only a sergeant, for saving the colours, and retrieving the fate of his company in very gallant style, after captain, lieutenant, and ensign were all down." "He was promoted, I hope?" said the colonel. "Aye — they made him an ensign, and he was allowed to creep up till he fell heir to a company?" The colonel bit his under-lip, and strode across the floor; "and that man was turned over to a second battalion, and died of his wounds without a pension." "He had a trifle," said the paymaster. "He was a silent, modest, young creature. He never shoved himself into view, or clamoured for promotion," — "and was shoved aside," said the colonel, finishing the paymaster's sentence, "till those who were troublesome were satisfied. Yes — yes — I know the way! And who is this you call a sergeant that could write a paper like that? A sergeant, did you say?" "Yes, a sergeant, and as brave a fellow as ever served, I have been assured." "Brave, sir! the man has brains as well as bravery who could write that paper. By my soul, I don't believe there are ten officers in my regiment that could write better, or conduct such an affair with such pith and judgment and originality. A mind among a thousand. A sergeant, indeed! bring him to me, when he comes, will you? I'll keep this paper." Right joyfully the paymaster returned to his apartments, the joy of a benevolent heart at the prospect of giving pleasure and doing good. When Allan returned for his paper, he told him where it was, and with the perfect self-possession of a brave highlandman, he followed that gentleman into the presence of the colonel, who spoke to him with the utmost kindness. He asked him how it came about that he who held only the rank of a sergeant should write so well? "He had been educated along with his master had enlisted along with him; they had never been separated until he died." "Were you with him when he saved the colours?" "Yes, sir, I was at his

side.' 'Who else were with you?' 'We two were alone. It was an ambuscade in a narrow defile — the officers were all taken down by the rifles before we were aware the enemy was near, and the party were beaten back.' 'How was the day retrieved?' 'When my master recovered the colours, he fixed them in a high cliff where the piper saw them, and he reanimated the men, and we rolled large stones over the rocks upon the French, and they got into confusion.' 'We! What we?' 'My master and I, sir.' 'And were you not promoted?' 'I was made sergeant, sir.' 'And how long ago is that?' 'Five years, sir.' The colonel stamped, bit his tongue, and walked half across the room pressing his lips together. 'What is your age?' 'Twenty-three, sir.'

"Well, my good brave soldier," said he, speaking cheerfully, 'here is your excellent paper, and in case you should find any disturbance from the crowd or any one to-morrow, I will send a file of men at your disposal to the market-cross in the morning.' Allan bowed his thanks with both hands on his breast, and he left the room. The colonel stood a moment looking at the door by which he had retired, and wheeling round on the paymaster, exclaimed, 'By all that's magnificent, that young fellow has already the stamp of a field-officer on him from brow to heel! Upon my honour, he has the air of a chieftain. A sergeant! he shall be no longer a sergeant!'

"Next morning at six o'clock there was seen at the market-cross a square-built highlander, rather short for his breadth, with shoulders like a Hercules, and neck like a bull, a square-cut, tight-drawn, stubborn mouth, blunt nose, jovial, twinkling, deep-set eyes, and under the margin of his bonnet, which was stuck a little askew on his close-curved head, there appeared, what is called 'a brow for a bargain.' There was nothing of the bully, nothing quarrelsome or cruel in his look. But there was that which could not but convince those who saw him, that it was physically impossible for that man to yield or to fly. With a pole in one hand, supporting a square board whereon Allan's magna charta was pasted, while the other rested on the muzzle of his musket, there he stood, and by his side the tall, limber, youthful form of Allan, in full uniform, with his sedate, mournful countenance, gentle and winning, smiling meekly under his high-plumed bonnet. Two soldiers paced as sentry behind. This strange sight drew to the spot the various work-people hurrying to their morning work. The paper was placed low enough to be read with perfect ease, while Allan and his cheery companion gladly explained its contents to all who required it. The wonder and curiosity of all were excited, and those who had not time to read as they went, promised to themselves to read it on their return.

"What Campbell's feelings had been during the preceding twenty hours no one knew, save himself and his offended God. There were many whom he ranked as acquaintances and friends; but, even to those who might be his coadjutors in the ordinary frauds and tricks of business, he could not — no, even he could not show Allan's letter; he could lay his heart and his case open to no man, he could ask no man's counsel. It seemed from his conduct that, at moments, he had vague hopes that it was impossible a boy, an ignorant friendless soldier lad, whom he tried to despise, could in good earnest do a thing so unheard of, a thing so out of the ordinary course of proceeding: but, if he dared to do it, he would tear it down. Then came a fearful qualm — 'a certain fearful looking for of judgment.' It was vivid Allan feared nothing; he had a sealed letter in his hand, could it be intended for his counsel? Then the horrid phalanx of infernal, damning witnesses from that cursed Appin and Lochaber.

"About ten o'clock, Campbell having ere then ascertained the extremity of the case, Allan received a message from one of his clerks that Mr. Campbell wished to see him. 'Tell Duncan Campbell,' said he, 'I will hold no communication with him, but am willing instantly to give him a

legal receipt for the money charged in this letter; say to him my letter to the lord advocate is not yet off; but it goes by the mail to-day at twelve o'clock, unless he pays the money.' This is all I have to say.'

"The young man bowed with instinctive respect to Allan, and went off with all speed—for he had been amongst the number of those who had read the letter, and during the few moments that his conversation with Allan lasted, he had heard the broad-shouldered clansman explaining its various contents to a young woman who was eagerly reading and listening; 'Allan More Stewart the herdsman.' 'That's me, my pretty dear,' said he, 'I'm the herdsman, Allan More—that means big Allan, dear, and Morni—this is Morni, my bra' dog, that nearly worried the scoundrel, dear, and he caught him by the ear, which he tore off, and then spat it out; my bra' dog, ye wanted none of his ugly flesh,' continued he, fondling the dog, 'mind ye yon night, Morni, when ye throttled Duncan Breck?' He then spoke to him in Gaelic, while the dog stood up wagging his tail with every gesture of delight.

"The mixture of rage and terror which agitated the spirit of the bad man on the return of his ambassador, was too violent to be concealed. He said little, but his livid lips trembled at the mention of the letter to the lord advocate, the most ghastly hue overspread his face; and the additional anecdote of Allan More Stewart, the herdsman, and his dog, seemed to shrink his features to half their usual size, blown out and bleated as they generally were, by insolence, evil thoughts, and high living. He felt again the iron gripe of those dreadful fists, accustomed to seize a highland bull by the horns, and compel the brute to do his bidding or break his neck. And then his atrocious dog. Oh, it made every fibre of his face and hands quiver and start, so that the uproar of the inner man was obvious even to the youngest novice of sin in his office, and it might have been a salutary lesson. Suddenly observing that he was the object of a gaze from every desk, his colour instantly changed to purple, and the spirits of hell seemed all glaring from his eyes; he started up, dashed into his sanctum, and with his foot banged the door with such vengeance that the whole tenement shook. It appears, however, that his reason soon returned so far as to remind him that rage would not avail, and that time was flying. In a short while he again issued forth, and was hurrying into the street, trying to look as usual, when probably the thoughts of Morni crossed his heart, and the recollection that the bank was in the town-house, near the market-cross; for he returned in a moment, went to his desk, and wrote an order on the bank for the sum demanded by Allan. This he gave to the clerk he had employed on the former mission, and merely saying to him to see that the receipt was on a proper stamp, and that the fellow fulfilled every part of the engagement, he calmly shut his door. Soon after, to the infinite amusement of his young men, they heard him try to whistle; but whether the ill-smothered bursts of laughing of the younger boys had reached his jealous ears, or whether the effort was too great, or had struck himself as too absurd, it is of little importance to ascertain, but the melancholy, discordant whee-whee wheeples in a very little time died away.

"By the time the negotiator came in sight of the market-cross, it was nearly impossible to approach it, the crowd reading the letter, or rather hearing it read, was so dense. He also saw that twelve o'clock was near at hand, and felt much anxiety lest he should be too late. He hustled and shouldered along, trying at first to reach Allan to desire him not to despatch his letter, but it being impossible from that quarter, he hastened to the bank, which he found exceedingly crowded, and in spite of his utmost efforts the town-clock struck twelve as he again reached the street. He soon got to the spot where Allan, the herdsman, stood, holding his 'portable pillory for

Maister Duncan Campbell's character,' as he heard him call it. As he came near he looked all round, exclaiming, 'Where is Sergeant Stewart?' 'Gone to the post-office, dear,' replied the highlander. Off flew the clerk by the nearest cut. At two turns he got a glimpse of Allan, and saw him with his hand up at the letter-box, and shouted so loud that every thing in the street started. Allan saw him, but the letter had dropped from his fingers at the instant. He comprehended the meaning of the pursuit, and darting into the post-office, forced his way to the clerk. 'Sir,' said he, 'I have this instant put a letter by mistake into the letter-box; may I entreat you to give it out again?' The clerk told him it was contrary to law. 'It is not yet stamped,' said Allan, 'and it is of the utmost consequence to have it out.' 'Who is it to?' said the clerk, holding in his hand the bunch he had just taken from the box. 'To the lord advocate,—this is it,' said Allan, touching a corner of it which he saw. 'Ho, ho!' said the clerk, looking knowingly up. 'Sergeant Stewart! my brave hero, let the villain swing.' Campbell's clerk was at their back, and joined his entreaties, showing the money in gold and bank paper in his hand. 'I know I am doing wrong,' said the good-natured fellow, as he suffered them to pull out the letter. 'I know I am wrong in giving a letter out of the office, and doubly wrong in coming between a villain and the gallows. But we have all read his character on the pillory yonder, and the money will do more good to the widow and orphans without the plague of taking his worthless life. The sooner he changes his quarters, however, the safer for himself. He will find the mob here as willing and as able to take him by the ear as the shepherd's dog. And, harkye, younker, you may give him a hint, *quietly*, you understand, to make his exit to-night by some back door or window, in case there should be any attempt to anticipate the gallows. It would be a pity to cheat the wuddy, however,' he added.

"The young men thanked him for sacrificing the forms of office to an act of mercy, and leaving him, hurried to the market-cross. There they found the herdsman in the highest state of joy and excitement, expatiating, reading, and explaining to the wondering mob, now describing the rescue of little Peggy Bahn, and then exhibiting Morni and enlarging on his merits. 'You all do see what he is, as peaceable as a lamb,—a pabe might play in his mouth. It was not because he was a fierce malicious tog. Och no, but because he saw the strong oppressing the weak. Little pretty Peggy Bahn in the claws of Tuncan Breck. Och, dears, Morni knows a Campbell! You know a Campbell, my prave tog! You will never stand by idle, my prave Morni, and see a Stewart wa'art by a Campbell!' His harangue was suddenly stopped by Allan addressing him in Gaelic, and letting him know the terms were complied with, the money paid back, and of course that he must remove with his pillory or gallows, or whatever he was calling it. Allan More looked somewhat disturbed. It was sounding a retreat in the arms of victory, for he loved his post dearly, the importance it conferred, the rapture of exposing a villain, and the rapture of praising his dog, and little Peggy Bahn, and her father, and her husband, and Allan, and, by implication, himself, having been fifty years, man and boy, their herd. However, he instantly lowered his gibbet, but gave a most significant glance and wink to the crowd around, as he moved off, which, it appeared, they understood, for they followed in his rear. But very soon, as soon as Allan and the clerk were out of sight, he found it inconvenient to carry the pole horizontally in his hand; he therefore hoisted it on his shoulder with a wearied 'Hoich, oich—the thing's a heafy weight!' taking care to turn the written side backwards, so that it could be seen and read by those who followed on his lagging steps.

"Slowly and heavily he trudged along to the outskirts of the town, where

finding a green knove and some trees, he set his pole to rest against one of them, and threw himself on the grass, as if quite worn out. 'Och, dears, I'm joyful to find myself on good green grass—it's next pest to heather. The smell of a town and the smell of its plack smoke, ton't acree with me at all at all. I like the clean caller air, and the clean, wholesome, weel-smelled peat reek of Appin and Lochaber, dears. Oich hoich!'

"As soon as the clerk had settled with Allan, he hurried back to his office, where he found his employer in the most uncontrollable agitation, having observed how soon the town-clock struck twelve, after the young man left him. The first articulate sounds he uttered were an inquiry after the letter. 'Was it off?' 'It was into the post-office, but we got it out again.' 'Who got it out again?' 'Sergeant Stewart and I, by our joint entreaties—and here is the receipt.' He seized the paper, and with a sort of convulsive grin, half anger, half agony, in an attempt to laugh, exclaimed—'The dog, the greedy, grasping bloodhound! So the sight of the gold was too much for him? So he snapped at the gold—the pillaging, red-coat robber? No wonder—my faith, it's but seldom he has seen or fingered such a sum!' 'He might have seen it and fingered it oftener, if you had not robbed his mistress of it,' cried the young man in a fury, as soon as he had recovered from his consternation so far as to speak. 'And since you dare to make such a return to the generous young fellow by whose efforts the paper was recovered from the post-office, which, otherwise, would have been, by this time, ten miles on the way to carry you to the gallows; I will instantly go and desire him to send off his letter and return the money. The law will soon restore it.' And as he flung out of the cockatrice den, he slammed the door at his heels and left his employer to the enjoyment of the hell kindled up afresh in his breast, that enviable association of hatred and terror, suspicion and rage, envy, malignity, and spite, which for ever feed the venomous gnawings of the worm that never dies, in a bad man's heart. Not that the young man seriously intended to put his threat in execution, but he had always despised his employer as a scoundrel, and the unexpected trait of ungrateful malice he had just exhibited towards Allan, roused him into wrath; and moreover, what, in addition to contempt, greatly supports and encourages impertinence in young and old, rich and poor, he knew that Campbell was in his power.

"As benevolence hastened the clerk to the relief of a bad man's mind, it will be easily guessed that its activity was not less in the generous heart of excellent Allan. The hurry and commotion of the whole transaction had so absorbed him, that it was only when he felt himself alone, and hurrying with all his speed towards the young, desolate widow's house, and felt the money actually in his hands, the heavy gold, and the bundle of bank paper, and grasped it, at once to assure himself of the reality, and to ensure its safety, and felt the success of his plan for compelling the hardened villain to refund the money, that he began to experience the extent of his happiness. He had said nothing of his scheme for punishing Campbell to the poor broken-hearted little girl, because he had no power of even guessing at its success. And, at no moment, had he ever allowed himself to hope for such a speedy result, which he attributed principally to the energy of the herdsman.

"After parting in such a state of agitation with grief and rage the day you left this, my dear friends, he was employed for several days and nights, writing, and blotting, and tearing paper,—pacing like a sentry on duty, or sitting with his head on his hands, for hours together. At last, as a prelude to his schemes, he wrote out a list of inquiries to be put to different people acquainted with the transactions of Campbell, relative to his attempt to carry off little Peggy Bahn,—which list he enclosed in a letter

to the clergyman of the district, explaining to him the situation and circumstances in which that unfortunate girl was plunged; and requesting him to go among the people and take down in writing a summary of such facts as they could make oath to in a court of law. He then applied to the herdsman's son, little Peggy's *factotum* as upholsterer and painter, — and the worthy fellow set off for Appin and Lochaber on foot next morning before daybreak. For it was his brother who had been made the unconscious agent for betraying her to a distance from home the night of the attempt to steal her, and he never thought enough could be done to expiate that sinless offence. Allan heard nothing for ten days — when, to his astonishment, the herdsman, painter, and Morni arrived, with a letter from the clergyman and a most satisfactory reply to the queries. Upon this foundation, he wrote his letter to Campbell; and his letter to the lord advocate, briefly stating all the circumstances of the case, and the points which would be sworn to.

"During the interval in which the painter was absent, Allan was not idle. But under the plea of searching for whatever documents might exist to prove the young widow's claims to various articles of her own property, for which she was charged legacy duty; — he had looked through every letter and paper in vain, for some trace of the 400 guinea transaction, such as might be useful to prove its atrocity. He was in despair, and about to give up the search, when he found, under one of his hands, which he had slapped in his grief and impatience upon the desk, a firm small packet, merely hidden by some trifle which had fallen upon it. He opened it, shivering at once with hope and fear, and found it contained all the villain's letters to Kenneth Stewart on the subject of obtaining his daughter in marriage — on the subject of the 400 guineas — his hints and threats on these subjects — and his offers to pay him back his gold if he would compel little Peggy to become his wife. There were also copies of all her father's replies to those letters, and a narrative of the whole transaction written and signed by the worthy man, and dated but a few days before his death.

"Copies of all those papers indefatigable Allan had made out, and enclosed along with the others to the lord advocate.

"It was the original mind of the energetic herdsman which suggested the making out the huge copy of the letter for the market-cross, and it was this measure which brought the affair to such a speedy issue.

"His heart throbbing with emotions which the greatest and best on earth might covet, excellent Allan entered the room where Little Peggy sat like a white marble statue, with her infant on her lap and her little boy on a stool at her knee. The instant he saw Allan, he sprung to his arms, and his mother kindly expressed her anxiety at not having seen him all the morning. He made the excuse of business, adding — 'and I fervently thank our merciful God! — the business is happily ended.' She raised her large dark eyes to his face, but did not speak. 'I have recovered the money from that bad man.' 'What money, Allan?' 'His overcharge for the dreadful tax, and, my dear lady, the 400 gold guineas, with full interest,' he replied, in an humble voice, and speaking very slow, for fear of startling her; as he laid the gold and bank paper on a little table she was resting upon. 'Oh! Allan, my dear Allan, how has this been possible?' She looked fixedly on him, and her lips quivered. He hoped tears would come to her eyes, but they closed, and she sunk back in her chair — if possible more ghastly pale than ever, and he found she had fainted. After the use of the usual means, she slowly came to life, and with all her native courtesy expressed her regret at the trouble and grief she had occasioned him in return for his ceaseless kindness and care. 'But, dear Allen, though I see money there, how can I suppose it possible you were able to extort it from that man,

whom it would be painful to me to name?' Allan then simply told her of his proceedings; and of the herdsman and Morni having come from Appin, and the great share the sturdy man and dog had in the merits of the triumph. A gleam passed across her once brilliant eyes, she held out both hands to Allan, but did not speak for some moments. At last she fervently and solemnly said, 'The blessing of God — the blessing of the dead and the dying, and when they are old enough to understand all they owe to Allan Stewart, the gratitude and the blessings and the love of my little orphans, for ever attend you, dearest and best of friends! I must soon go hence, Allan. Life cannot be dear to me now; but, were it the will of heaven, oh, it would be very desirable, for the sake of these innocents! But it is not so ordered, and, with the blessing of God on the means your excellent young heart and sound judgment have devised a method to recover, after all hope of it had perished, I trust they may be kept above absolute want!' She then laid one hand over the money, and continued, 'O Allan! how precious this is in my estimation for your sake, and their sakes; and it was my dear dear father's hard-earned 400 guineas, toiled for and saved for his poor little only —' her lips quivered, and her sweet voice died away.

"Her interview with the herdsman and Morni was far from desirable, but could not be dispensed with, and few things now seemed to agitate her. The deathly calm of her manner awe-struck and solemnized even this joyous stubborn retainer, who, like all native highlanders, had a great deal of tact, and was habitually respectful and polite; and he left her with a tear in his eyes, and his heart quelled with a sadness he had never felt before.

"In the evening Allan set off for the barracks, feeling that it was due to the kind paymaster to inform him of the success of his attack upon the lawyer, the news of which was received with the most unbounded joy and applause. To soldiers in barracks during the time of peace, even smaller and more every-day occurrences than this occasion a sensation, from the colonel down to the very drummer. The men, who had successively kept guard behind Allan, had carried the report of what was going on to those in the barracks, and it had spread, indeed, through the whole regiment as a piece of news, and an excellent way to punish a villain. But it was scarcely even thought of as the means of enforcing the restitution of nearly seven hundred pounds; and, when this became known, it was felt by the poor soldiers as a triumph; and Allan was hailed, on his return from the paymaster, as a victorious general, and he with difficulty made his escape from their boisterous mirth and jokes and congratulations.

"About ten days after this, the colonel sent for Allan, who immediately attended the summons. He was received with the same, or even greater kindness and affability than before; and the colonel presented him with a folded paper, desiring him to read it. On opening it, he was much surprised to find it an ensign's commission, and he thanked the generous colonel with so much warmth, and in such an appropriate and manly manner, for this unexpected gift, as raised him highly in his esteem. 'You were wounded at Waterloo?' said the veteran. 'Only a sabre wound — I was well in a month,' replied Allan. 'That is well,' said the colonel in reply, 'and I hear you were in five-and-twenty battles before you were twenty years old.' 'Indeed, sir, I don't know, I have forgotten,' said Allan, almost laughing; 'perhaps I did not know the difference between a battle and a skirmish, — and I dare say I never counted, sir.' 'Well, others counted who were in the same company, it appears; and, as to the individuals who are engaged or who suffer, the difference between a battle and a skirmish is not material, whatever it may be to the army and the cause; and as that medal is all you have as a memorial of all that fighting — here is something to help your memory, and furnish your new wardrobe

as a commissioned officer.' Allan was speechless when he was presented with a hundred pound bill from the Waterloo Fund. 'Mr. Stewart,' said the good man, 'do n't trouble yourself to thank me. You have been a brave and faithful soldier, and a good and gallant and exemplary man, not only as a soldier, but as a friend and a Christian — and *that* money you receive as your due. I know you are grateful for it — for all good men are grateful, though they sometimes can't say much about it, — but do n't let it oppress you with a sense of obligation,' continued he, as he laid his hand upon his shoulder, 'and now — as to Mrs. Stewart, — How is that poor young lady?' 'Sir,' said Allan, struggling to recover himself, but almost choking from the tumult of his various feelings, 'I think — she is dying.' 'Dying! oh no. Heaven forbid! and her little infants! what are her complaints?' 'None, sir — the doctor calls it atropé — I call it a broken heart.' The colonel strode about the room. 'Is she confined to-bed?' 'Oh no, sir, she gets up regularly, and attends to the children, but she grows weaker every hour; though she never complains or says she is ill.' 'Do you think I could see her without giving trouble, were I to call?' 'I think so; nothing now seems to trouble her — it is the stillness of death,' said Allan, his words scarcely articulate, and tears rolling over his face. After a long pause, the colonel said, 'Will you ask permission for me to call? I have made an arrangement about some small affairs in behalf of the children, and want to know her own opinion and wishes on the subject.' 'I hope God will reward you, sir!' was all Allan had power to utter; with his clasped hands holding his commission pressed to his breast, and his graceful body bending in humble grateful reverence towards his kind benefactor, he then took leave, and in spite of the injunctions not to allow himself to feel oppressed by his obligations, his heart was agitated and softened and subdued and confused by a flood of tumultuous feeling.

"A gentle tap at the appointed hour announced the good man's arrival at the door of the widow's silent mansion. He was introduced by Allan into her little parlour, where she received him with that still and solemn, or rather fixed, and death-like composure, which was peculiar to her since that deadly blow to her heart which laid him, to whom it was united from infancy, in the dust. In spite of what the colonel had heard of her youth, her beauty, and her broken heart — these are such hackneyed words! — he was utterly astonished; and often says he had never seen such irresistible, unquestionable evidence of mortal grief. When he had recovered his composure, he apologized for intruding, but said he had not allowed himself to dread that she was so unwell; and selfishly wished to indulge himself in the pleasure of being the bearer of her pension from the War Office, and also a similar payment from the Waterloo Fund. 'Oh, sir,' she said, 'oh, may the blessing of the widow and the orphan — of these poor little things so soon to be left alone — ever rest upon you! — In my uttermost desolation I have ever steadily fixed my trust in the all-powerful, all-merciful Being who calls himself the Father of the fatherless. And I know that my Redeemer liveth; and, even in the darkest hour of calamity, never forsakes the righteous man, or will leave his children to beg their bread. Humbly do I now adore the mercy which has spared me to see this promise fulfilling! I shall soon go to my Father and their Father, to my God and their God — and, oh, sir! if beyond the grave we remember what is dear to us on earth — then shall my prayers be for you, and my inestimable Allan. I go without anxiety or apprehension. The blessed Saviour, who loved little children while he was in this world, will not, in heaven, abandon the brave man's orphans.' 'Dear lady,' said the colonel, with deep emotion, 'your children shall, indeed, be provided for. Here is his royal highness, the admirable commander-in-chief's order, for this darling boy's admission to